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THE BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

**THE
BIBLE STUDY
NEW TESTAMENT**

**THE GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN
and
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION**

with
Explanatory Notes
by
Rhoderick D. Ice

**Volume Two
The Letters and Revelation**

College Press, Joplin, Missouri

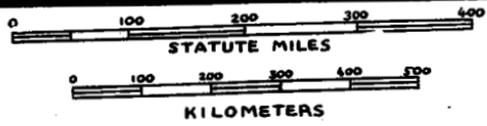
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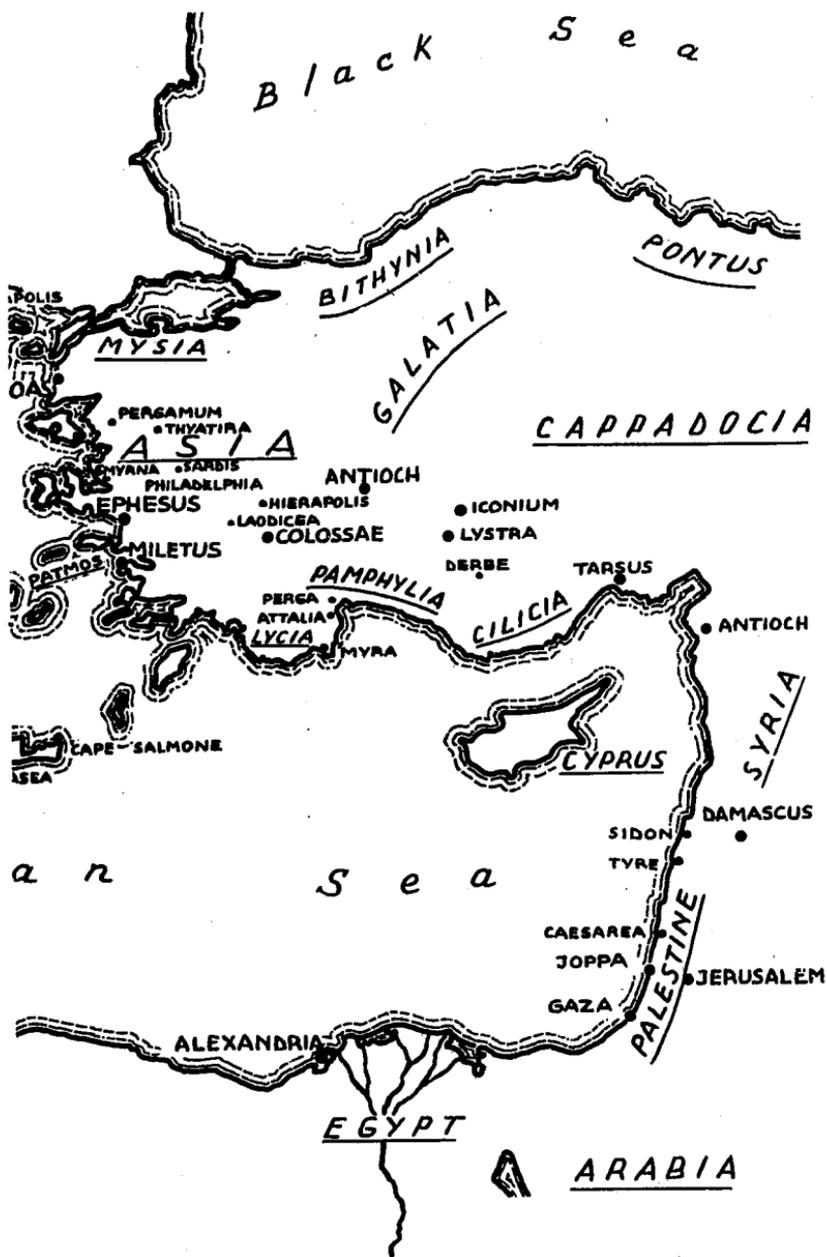
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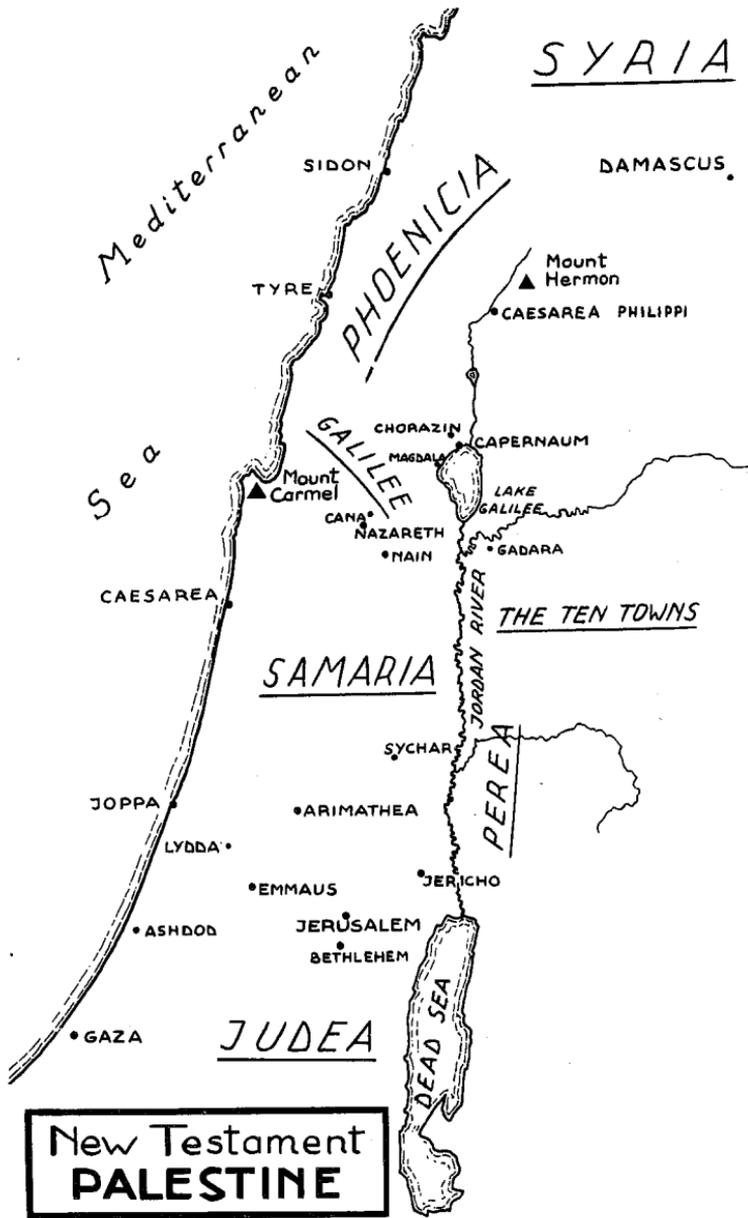
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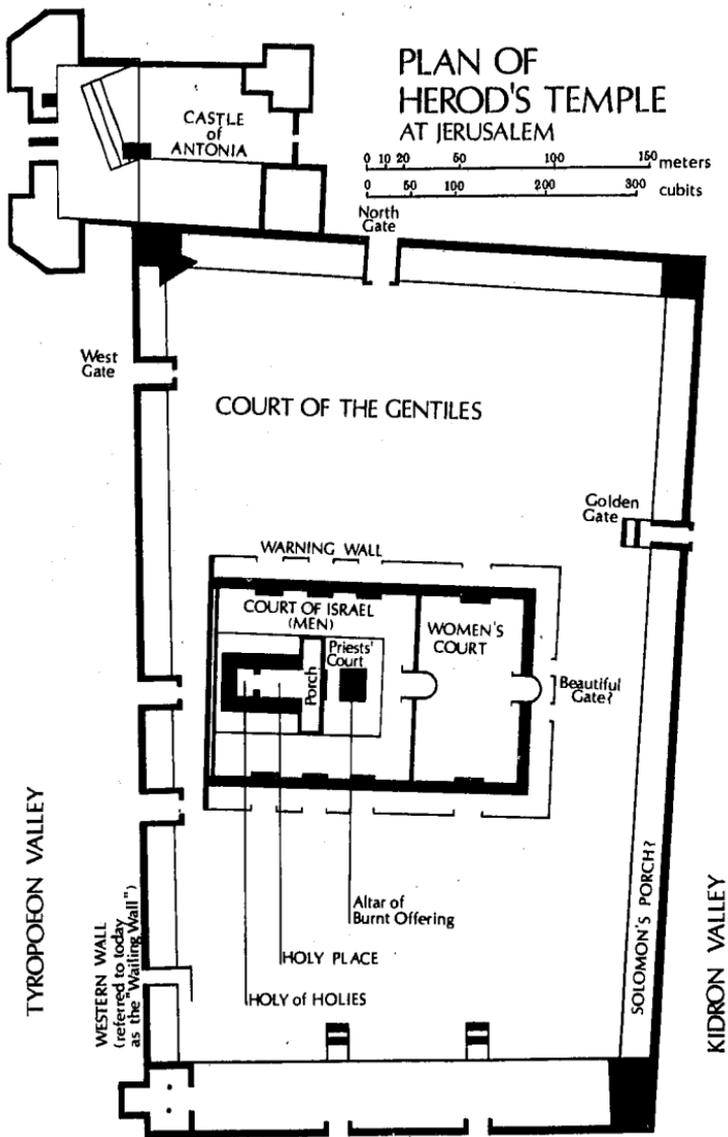


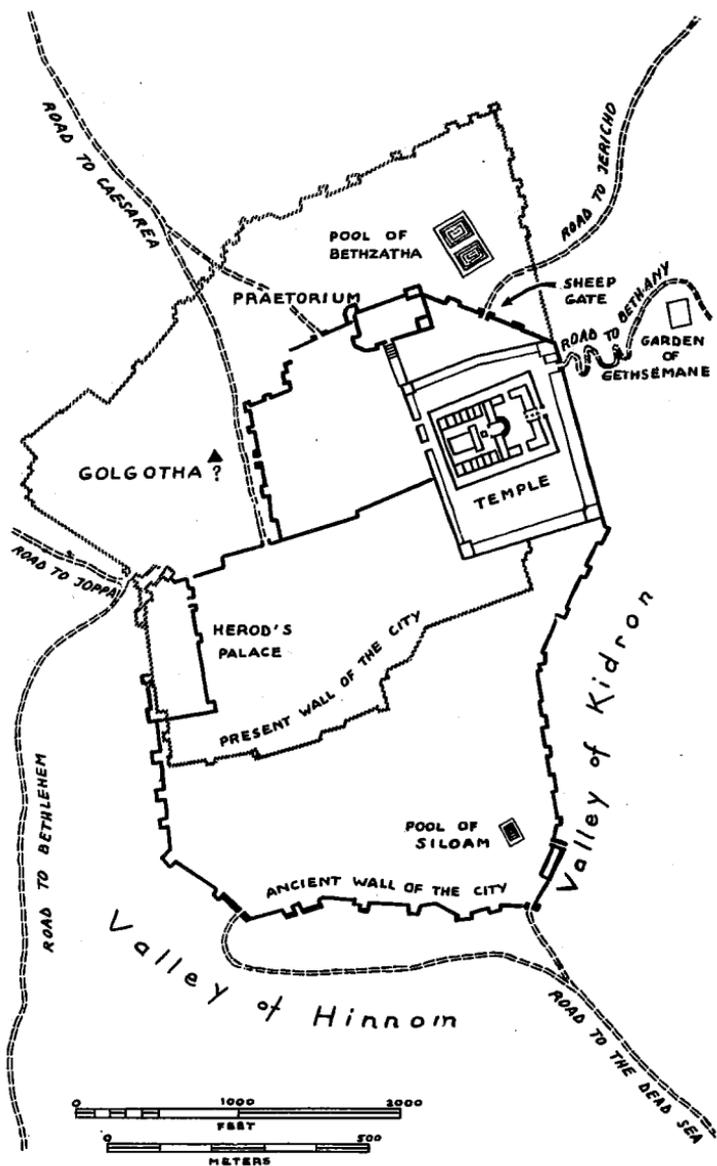
The WORLD of the
NEW TESTAMENT











JERUSALEM
and its surroundings

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

The Apostle Peter said that Paul wrote some things which were difficult to understand (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Romans is perhaps the most difficult of Paul's inspired writing, yet for just this reason it is extremely valuable. Luther says: "You find, then, in this epistle, the greatest abundance of things that a Christian ought to know: what the Law is, the Gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, righteousness, Christ, God, good works, love, hope, cross-bearing, also how we are to conduct ourselves in every relation toward the godly and toward sinners, toward friends, toward enemies, and toward ourselves . . . It seems, therefore, that the apostle's object in this epistle was to draw up a *syllabus of the entire Christian and evangelical doctrine, and to prepare an introduction to the entire Old Testament.*"

A Judge once said that "every part of a document should be examined in its relation to the whole, and the whole examined in its relation to the different parts." This is true of the entire Bible, but especially so for this Letter to the Romans. Each verse and each statement stands in its relation to the entire Letter, and to the entire Bible. Some have said that Paul took a Jewish Gospel and distorted it with his own opinion. *This cannot be true!* The ONE Holy Spirit guided the sacred writers and each wrote what God wanted written! Compare 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

The controversy about the Law of Moses erupted very early at Rome. A certain type of Jew, both rich and extremist, fought over this question with more bitterness than in other churches. See note on Acts 6:9. The unbelieving Jews joined in the battle, and so great was the controversy that Emperor Claudius banished all the Jews from Rome (see Acts 18:2 and note).

No one knows just when the church was planted in Rome. There were already Christians there before Paul arrived (*Acts 28:14-15*). On the day of Pentecost, there were both Jews and Gentiles converted to Judaism at Jerusalem who had come there from Rome (*Acts 2:10-11*). Paul wrote this letter to the Romans from Corinth, during his three months in Greece (*Acts 20:2-3*). At the time he wrote, he was about to take money to the poor of the messianic community in Jerusalem (*Rom. 15:25-28*). *Ramsay* gives the date of 57 A.D., in the spring, for the time of writing.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

1 From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, and an apostle chosen and called by God to preach his Good News.

²The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, and written in the Holy Scriptures. ³It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David; ⁴as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. ⁵Through him God gave me the privilege of being an apostle, for the sake of Christ, in order to lead people of all nations to believe and obey. ⁶This also includes you who are in Rome, whom God has called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷And so I write to all of you in Rome whom God loves and has called to be his own people:

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

.1-7. **From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus.** The custom in the first century was for the writer to introduce himself at the beginning of a letter. **Chosen and called by God.** Paul makes this strong statement of his "apostleship," because Jews of the "circumcision party" tried very hard to discredit him. Jesus Christ appointed Paul to be an apostle (*Acts 9:15; 1 Cor. 9:1*). **To preach his Good News.** God himself is the source of the gospel. It is God's act in Christ which sets us free (*compare 1 Cor. 2:8-10*). **Was promised long ago.** The Good News was no "off-beat distortion of Judaism." It was the fulfillment of God's Plan. The prophets of the Old Testament pointed forward to "Someone who is coming." **It is about his Son.** Christianity is based on the *rock-foundation* of this fact: Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God. Certain Jews were offended by this claim (*see Luke 22:67-71*). **He was born.** Christ was uniquely the "child of the woman" (*see notes on 1 Tim. 2:15; Gal. 4:4*). This made him a descendant of David by his human birth, since his human mother belonged to "David's family." Compare *Matt. 22:41-46*. **As to his divine holiness.** Jesus had no human father, but God himself by means of the Holy Spirit was *directly* the father of Jesus. But more than this, Jesus was the Eternal Logos in human form. Both humanity and divinity were united in him. Compare *Rom. 8:3*. **He was shown.** The "raising from death" proved him to be the son of God!!! **Through him God gave me.** Christ chose the apostles directly. Compare *John 17:6-12*. **An apostle.** "Apostle" originally meant one of the ships which transported grain on the Mediterranean Sea. Apostles had all the miraculous "gifts from the Spirit," and only they could *pass these on* to others (*Acts 8:14-17*). Paul was an apostle and could do these things. **In order.** "To believe and obey" = "unto obedience of faith." Paul's mission was to proclaim the Good News so people could believe and obey. Compare *Rom. 10:17; Acts 26:16-18*. [On *faith*, see note on *James 2:19*.] **This also includes you.** These Christians at Rome had believed and obeyed. God had called them to Christ through the Good News. **And so I write.** Paul sends this letter to all who are "God's people" in Rome. Rome was the capital of the world, home of Emperor Nero, a city of some two million. **Whom God loves.** Compare *Col. 3:12* and note. **His own people.** Christians are *uniquely*

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

⁸First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for all of you; because the whole world is hearing of your faith. ⁹God can prove that what I say is true—the God whom I serve with all my heart by preaching the Good News about his Son. God knows that I always remember you ¹⁰every time I pray. I ask that God, in his good will, may at last make it possible for me to visit you now. ¹¹For I want very much to see you in order to share a spiritual blessing with you, to make you strong. ¹²What I mean is that both you and I will be helped at the same time, you by my faith and I by your faith.

¹³You must remember this, my brothers: many times I have planned to visit you, but something has always kept me from doing so. I want to win converts among you, too, as I have among other

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Longing to Visit Rome

First, I thank my God ⁸ through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve ⁹ with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰ in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

I long to see you so that I ¹¹ may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and ¹² I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I ¹³ do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

God's own people. [*Saint* originally meant "one consecrated to God" = "God's own people."] **Give you grace and peace.** This is Paul's greeting to them. It is a prayer for God and Jesus to bless them. Note that Paul was not a "Unitarian." [Paul states the gospel in this introduction: (1) Jesus is the Son of God; (2) he took our humanity; (3) he demonstrated divine power; (4) he was raised from death; (5) men are saved when they believe and obey.]

8-15. **First, I thank my God.** Paul made it a habit to thank God through Jesus Christ for each and every believer. Here he directs these words to the Christians at Rome to show his deep interest in their spiritual health. **Because the whole world.** Rome was the center of civilization, and therefore the church at Rome would be known and talked about everywhere. **God can prove.** Only God could know Paul's private prayers. God does hear his people pray (see *Rev. 8:1-5 and notes*). **Whom I serve with all my heart.** Paul made his whole life a *living sacrifice*! ["All my heart" = "in spirit" (*John 4:23-24*).] **That I always remember you.** This shows his deep love for all God's people. Compare *Eph. 1:15-16; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2*. **I ask that God.** Paul asked God to allow him to go to Rome. God did do this, but in an unusual way (see note on *Acts 28:16*). **For I want very much to see you.** Compare *1 Thess. 2:11 and note*. **To share a spiritual blessing with you.** This means that so far, no apostle had ever been at Rome. The spiritual blessings (gifts from the Spirit) were *passed on* by the apostles. See note on *Acts 8:17*. **To make you strong.** See note on *1 Cor. 12:7*. This would give them "instant maturity." **Both you and I will be helped.** No hint of despotism here! They were *partners and co-workers* in Christ. **Many times I have planned.** Such as *Acts 19:21*. But the time had not been right. When Paul did go, the whole church watched him (so to speak). **I want to win converts.** This fierce desire burned in Paul

Gentiles. ¹⁴For I have an obligation to all peoples, to the civilized and to the savage, to the educated and to the ignorant. ¹⁵So then, I am eager to preach the Good News to you also who live in Rome.

The Power of the Gospel

¹⁶I have complete confidence in the gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews and also the Gentiles. ¹⁷For the gospel reveals how God puts men right with himself: it is through faith, from beginning to end. As the scripture says, "He who is put right with God through faith shall live."

The Guilt of Mankind

¹⁸God's wrath is revealed coming down from heaven upon all the sin and evil of men whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known.

I am obligated both to 14 Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so 15 eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

I am not ashamed of the 16 gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the 17 gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

God's Wrath Against Mankind

The wrath of God is being 18 revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their

like a fire! The Gentiles were his special responsibility (*Acts 9:15*). **For I have an obligation.** God had put Paul right with himself. Now Paul is sent to proclaim the Good News to everyone everywhere!!! The civilized Greeks and Romans had contempt for other people; and the educated had contempt for the ignorant. But Paul's obligation applied to all (*ours does too*). **So then, I am eager.** Not just willing, but eager!

16-17. **I have complete confidence in the gospel.** Paul is making a positive declaration and the TEV words it so! The gospel is the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free! **It is God's power to save all who believe.** The gospel includes *facts* to be believed, *commands* to be obeyed, and *promises* to be received! The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (*1 Cor. 15:1-4*) form the *focal-point* of God's offer to put men right with himself. Compare *1 Cor. 1:23-25*. **First the Jews.** This offer from God came first to the Jews. **Also the Gentiles.** [Greek = Gentile.] God's same terms of salvation were preached to both Jew and Gentile. **For the gospel reveals.** The obedient believer has the righteousness of Christ ritually credited (imputed) to him. Compare *Rom 3:21-26; 8:3-4*. **It is through faith.** *Eddins* says: "Further, the actions of obedience are actions growing out of faith. When considered this way God's plan is "faith from beginning to end." [Faith is *obediential*: See note on *James 2:19*.] **As the scripture says.** The quotation is from *Habakuk 2:4*. The Old Testament had predicted this system of *righteousness by means of faith*.

18. **God's wrath is revealed.** The balance of this chapter shows that God is justified in sending his wrath on the sin and evil of men. Salvation is not "make-believe!" The Law shows the reality of sin. Against the background of the Law, God's act in Christ to set men free is clearly seen as a beautiful act of LOVE! **Whose evil ways prevent.** Evil men inflict *blindness* upon themselves and others, and so prevent the truth from being known.

¹⁹God punishes them, because what men can know about God is plain to them. God himself made it plain to them. ²⁰Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen. Men can perceive them in the things that God has made. So they have no excuse at all! ²¹They know God, but they do not give him the honor that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense and their empty minds are filled with darkness. ²²They say they are wise, but they are fools; ²³instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

²⁴Because men are such fools, God has given them over to do the filthy things their hearts desire, and they do shameful things with each

wickedness, since what may 19 be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew 21 God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they 22 claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged 23 the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them 24 over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

19. **God punishes them.** God did not "cut off" the Gentiles and leave them with no knowledge at all of him. Melchizedek and Balaam were both priests of God *outside* of the Law of Moses. There could have been others, although the scripture is silent. The point is that there was enough about God which *could be known* that the evil men of *verse 18* have no excuse for their action. Compare *Acts 17:27*.

20. **Ever since God created the world.** "Have been clearly seen" is in the *continuous tense*. Ever since Creation, enough evidence has been present to prevent anyone from worshiping lifeless images. There is no excuse, then, since no one can claim ignorance.

21. **They know God.** *MacKnight* says: "The writings of Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, Cicero, and other philosophers . . . prove that the learned heathens, though ignorant of the way of salvation, were acquainted with the unity and spirituality of God, and had just notions of his perfections, of the creation and government of the world, and of the duties which men owe to God and to one another." When men in their pride deliberately blind themselves to Truth, they plunge deeper into the darkness of evil. [Heart = mind.]

22. **But they are fools.** Those who repudiate God, are fools. Intelligence does not keep anyone from making a fool of himself. The Greeks and Romans were proud of their wisdom, but their worship of images showed them to be fools.

23. **Instead of worshiping the immortal God.** Nature clearly shows there is an immortal God who is the Creator. When they made themselves *blind* to God, they began worshiping false gods and made images of them.

24. **To do the filthy things.** God himself did not *cause* their sin, but when they rejected him, he allowed them to bring trouble upon themselves. The false religions accelerated the moral decay of the Gentile world. Compare note on *1 Thess. 1:9*.

other. ²⁵They exchange the truth about God for a lie; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever! Amen.

²⁶Because men do this, God has given them over to shameful passions. Even the women pervert the natural use of their sex by unnatural acts. ²⁷In the same way the men give up natural sexual relations with women and burn with passion for each other. Men do shameful things with each other, and as a result they themselves are punished as they deserve for their wrongdoing.

²⁸Because men refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not. ²⁹They are filled with all kinds of wickedness, evil, greed, and vice; they are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, deceit, and malice. They gossip, ³⁰and speak evil of one another; they are hateful to God, insolent, proud, and boastful; they think of more ways to do evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they are immoral; they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness or pity to others.

They exchanged the truth of 25
God for a lie, and worshiped
and served created things
rather than the Creator—
who is forever praised.
Amen.

Because of this, God gave 26
them over to shameful lusts.
Even their women ex-
changed natural relations
for unnatural ones. In the 27
same way the men also a-
bandoned natural relations
with women and were in-
flamed with lust for one an-
other. Men committed in-
decent acts with other men,
and received in themselves
the due penalty for their per-
version.

Furthermore, since they 28
did not think it worthwhile
to retain the knowledge of
God, he gave them over to a
depraved mind, to do what
ought not to be done. They 29
have become filled with
every kind of wickedness,
evil, greed and depravity.
They are full of envy, mur-
der, strife, deceit and mal-
ice. They are gossips, slan-
derers, God-haters, inso-
lent, arrogant and boastful;
they invent ways of doing
evil; they disobey their
parents; they are senseless, 31
faithless, heartless, ruthless.

25. **They exchange the truth.** Some think the images were originally intended to help focus the mind on God. In time, the image *became* "god" for them, and God the Creator was forgotten.

26-27. **Because men do this.** That is, because men make themselves and others blind to Truth. **Even the women.** They committed unnatural acts (such as lesbianism) with *other women*. **In the same way the men.** The Romans of the first century felt no guilt about homosexual activity. **Natural sexual relations.** See *1 Cor. 7:1-5* and notes. **They themselves are punished.** Wrongdoing curses and finally destroys the one who practices such things.

28. **To corrupted minds.** Compare *2 Thess. 2:9-12*. Those whom God cannot *convince*, he *confuses*. See note on *Matt. 24:21* for an example of what people bring on themselves by rejecting God.

29. **They are filled.** The language of the TEV shows us clearly the character of those who have *corrupted minds*.

30. **They are hateful to God.** Sin is a hateful thing to God. See note on *Matt. 27:46*.

31. **They are immoral.** *ASUNETOUS* = without insight into moral and religious things. These are so *amoral* that they have lost all sense of God and evil. **No kindness or pity.** Compare *Matt. 18:21-35* and notes.

³²They know that God's law says that people who live in this way deserve death. Yet, not only do they continue to do these very things, but also approve of others who do them.

God's Judgment

2 Do you, my friend, pass judgment on others? You have no excuse at all, whoever you are. For when you judge others, but do the same things that they do, you condemn yourself. ²We know that God is right when he judges the people who do such things as these. ³But you, my friend, do these very things yourself for which you pass judgment on others! Do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴Or perhaps you despise his great kindness, tolerance, and patience. Surely you know that God is kind because he is trying to lead you to repent. ⁵But you have a hard and stubborn heart. So then, you are making your own punishment even greater on the Day when God's wrath and right judgments will be reveal-

Although they know God's ³² righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.

God's Righteous Judgment

2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness should lead you to repentance?

But because of your stubbornness and your unre-

32. **They know that God's law.** "They" means the evil men and women just described. God's "natural law of right and wrong" is written in the minds of every human being! Compare *verse 19*. **Deserve death.** The Gentile philosophers showed they knew this, by the things they wrote. **Yet, not only.** This is a deliberate act, because they know what God's law (*of nature*) says. Knowing the consequences, they sin, approve of others who do the same things, and actually taught people how to sin!!! Historians such as Tacitus, Horace, Seneca and Juvenal show that this picture of sin which Paul shows to us, is accurate in describing the Gentile world of the first century. This is conclusive proof of the *mess* man makes of things when he tries to escape God.

1. **Do you?** Paul has shown in *chapter 1* just why God's wrath comes on the Gentiles. Now he shows the Jews that they are no better, even though they had God's special revelation, the Old Testament. The Jews may not have gone as deep into moral decay as did the Gentiles, but the same *root* lay at the bottom of their sin. They rejected God's truth. For this reason, every time they denounced the Gentiles, they denounced themselves also.

2. **We know that God is right.** Truth makes it right for God to judge those who make sin a habit, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Compare *Rev. 18:4-9*.

3. **These very things yourself.** The Jew did think he was exempt from God's wrath. Read what Jesus said in *Matt. 7:3-5*. Many think their own sin will go unpunished!

4. **Or perhaps you despise.** They did despise God's love, because they did not understand. The fact that God did not punish them immediately for their sin caused them to think they would never be punished. Therefore they despised the Law, because they believed it was inoperative. But God's kindness was intended to make them repent. See *2 Pet. 3:9*.

5. **But you have a hard and stubborn heart.** By misunderstanding God's kindness, they closed their minds to Truth. They used God's *patience* to sin even more against him. This increased the amount of their guilt. [Degrees of punishment? See note on *Luke 12:48*.]

ed. ⁶For God will reward every person according to what he has done. ⁷Some men keep on doing good, and seek glory, honor, and immortal life; to them God will give eternal life. ⁸Other men are selfish and reject what is right, to follow what is wrong; on them God will pour his wrath and anger. ⁹There will be suffering and pain for all men who do what is evil, for the Jews first and also for the Gentiles. ¹⁰But God will give glory, honor, and peace to all who do what is good, to the Jews first, and also to the Gentiles. ¹¹For God judges everyone by the same standard.

¹²The Gentiles do not have the Law of Moses; they sin and are lost apart from the Law. The Jews have the Law; they sin and are judged by the Law. ¹³For it is not by hearing the Law that men are put right with God, but by doing what the

pentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's

6. **For God will reward.** Having Abraham for an ancestor will be no help. God treats all men alike. The greatest sin is disbelief. The greatest work is to believe Jesus is the Messiah. [On the nature of faith, see note on *James 2:19*.]

7. **Some men keep on doing good.** Even though salvation is based entirely on God's act in Christ, we save ourselves by a series of actions (see *Phil. 2:12*; *Acts 2:40*; *1 Cor. 15:58*; *2 Pet. 1:10*). Man divides himself into two groups: those who obey God; and those who obey the Devil. Faith is action (see *James 2:22*).

8. **Other men are selfish.** This verse shows the character of the wicked. *Verse 9* shows their punishment. God lets us choose which group we are in, and Jesus is the basis of that choice (see *John 14:21-24*).

9. **There will be suffering and pain.** God's wrath will come on the wicked. See *Jude 14-16*. Compare note on *Rev. 15:1*. **For the Jews first.** The Jews were *first in line* to receive God's truth. Therefore, they will be *first in line* to be judged.

10. **But God will give glory.** Glory, honor, and peace are the eternal reward of those who do what is good. Again, the Jew stands *first in line*, because he heard about it first. [But no man really does good. See *Romans 3:9-20*.]

11. **By the same standard.** Both Jew and Gentile are measured by the same standard. *Acts 10:34-35* explains this.

12. **The Gentiles do not have the Law of Moses.** The subject is "Jews and Gentiles." The TEV restates the subject to make it clear. The Law of Moses was God's revelation to the Jew only. The Gentile had no part in the Law. He sinned and was lost apart from the Law. See also *Acts 17:30*.

13. **But by doing.** The Jew heard the Law, but did not obey it. Therefore it did him no good. Only those who obey the Law can be put right with God by it. [The technical term is *justified*.] Whether there is anyone who actually can obey the Law is not a question asked here.

Law commands. ¹⁴The Gentiles do not have the Law; but whenever of their own free will they do what the Law commands, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the Law. ¹⁵Their conduct shows that what the Law commands is written in their hearts. Their consciences also show that this is true, since their thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them. ¹⁶And so, according to the Good News I preach, this is how it will be on that Day when God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of men.

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷What about you? You call yourself a Jew; you depend on the Law and boast about God; ¹⁸you know what God wants you to do, and you have learned from the Law to choose what is right; ¹⁹you are sure that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in darkness,

sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, ¹⁴ when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they ¹⁵ show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take ¹⁶ place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

The Jews and the Law

Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; if you ¹⁸ know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced ¹⁹ that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who

14. **The Gentiles.** When we examine things closely, we see that there is no such thing as a man absolutely without the knowledge of God's will. *Rom. 1:18-32* shows this, therefore Paul's argument is accurate. The Law did not make the Jew closer to God than the Gentile, even though it was an advantage. The whole point of Paul's reasoning is that God has decreed only one method of putting men right with himself, and will follow one rule in rewarding and punishing them.

15. **Their conduct shows.** Their actions show that they do have this Law written in their hearts. Their consciences also demonstrate this by showing they know right from wrong. They have a sense of moral values. The codes of law in the ancient Gentile world showed this also.

16. **And so.** This verse connects with *verses 12-13*. There will be no secrets on that Day! Those who have sinned (the whole human race) will be judged, whether under the Law or apart from the Law. See *verse 3*. **Through Jesus Christ.** The fact that God will judge the whole human race through Jesus Christ is declared many times in the scriptures. See *John 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10*.

17. **What about you?** Some were proud and boasted because they were Jews. Paul has showed that all will be strictly judged according to their actions, whether they have the Law or not. In *verses 17-20*, Paul shows what the Jew claimed for himself. **You call yourself a Jew.** They were proud of this name, because it meant to them that they were "God's chosen people," and this made them proud. **You depend on the Law.** There is an article before *law* in the corrected Greek text. The Law was their "good luck charm." **And boast about God.** They thought of God as "their personal property," and believed they were "eternally secure," no matter what they did!

18. **You know what God wants you to do.** They did have this advantage. But they thought it was enough if they had this knowledge. Compare *verse 13*.

19. **A guide for the blind.** This was their claim. God intended the Jews to be teachers of the Truth. But they failed to do it. Their actions did not match their claims.

²⁰an instructor for the foolish, and a teacher for the young. You are certain that in the Law you have the full content of knowledge and of truth.

²¹You teach others—why don't you teach yourself? You preach, "Do not steal"—but do you yourself steal? ²²You say, "Do not commit adultery"—but do you commit adultery? You detest idols—but do you rob temples? ²³You boast about having God's law—but do you bring shame on God by breaking his law? ²⁴The scripture says, "Because of you Jews, the Gentiles speak evil of God's name."

²⁵If you obey the Law, your circumcision is of value; but if you disobey the Law, you might as well never have been circumcised. ²⁶If the Gentile, who is not circumcised, obeys the commands of the Law, will not God regard him as though he were circumcised? ²⁷And so you Jews will be condemned by the Gentiles, because you break the Law, even though you have it written down and are circumcised, while they obey the Law, even though they are not physically cir-

are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even

20. You are certain. They believed the Law was God's complete revelation to the world. [It wasn't! God's complete revelation is Jesus Christ. Compare *John 1:17*; *Heb. 1:1-3*; *1 John 1:1-4*. The Law was in charge of us until Christ came (*Gal. 3:24*).]

21. You teach others. In verses 21-24, he shows their actual practice. They did not "practice what they preached." **Do not steal.** The Law said this, but Jews were famous (or infamous) for their *shrewd* business deals.

22. Do not commit adultery. The Law said this, but some of the best known teachers of the Law made a habit of this sin. **You detest idols.** Babylonian captivity taught the Jews never to worship idols again! By "robbing temples," Paul means they conducted business deals which brought them in contact with idols and their temples, defiling themselves, but feeling no guilt about it.

23. You boast about. They were proud of the fact that God had given them the Law. But they shamed God by the way they lived their lives.

24. The scripture says. The quotation is from *Isa. 52:5* in the Septuagint. Their greed, their cheating, and their hypocrisy were well known to the Gentiles. And the Gentiles judged the Law of Moses by what they saw in those who claimed to follow it.

25. If you obey the Law. The Jews were very proud of their circumcision, because this was the seal of the Covenant. But it could not substitute for obedience. Compare Paul's inspired statement in *Gal. 5:12*.

26. If the Gentile. The Gentile who obeys is "circumcised in spirit," that is, he becomes a descendant of Abraham (*Gal. 3:29*). The disobedient Jew is no better than a Gentile. The obedient Gentile is as good as a Jew.

27. Will be condemned by the Gentiles. Compare *Matt. 12:41-42* and notes. The obedience of the Gentiles who did not have the Law, condemned the Jews who did have the Law but did not obey it.

cumcised. ²⁸After all, who is a real Jew, truly circumcised? Not the man who is a Jew on the outside, whose circumcision is a physical thing. ²⁹Rather, the real Jew is the man who is a Jew on the inside, that is, whose heart has been circumcised, which is the work of God's Spirit, not of the written Law. This man receives his praise from God, not from men.

3 Do the Jews have any advantage over the Gentiles then? Or is there any value in being circumcised? ²Much, indeed, in every way! In the first place, God trusted his message to the Jews. ³What if some of them were not faithful? Does it mean that for this reason God will not be faithful? ⁴Certainly not! God must be true, even though every man is a liar. As the scripture says,

"You must be shown to be right when you speak;
you must win your case when you are being tried."

though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

A man is not a Jew if he ²⁸is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

God's Faithfulness

3 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written:

"So that you may be proved right in your words and prevail in your judging."

28. Who is a real Jew? Nationality and circumcision did not make a real Jew.

29. Who is a Jew on the inside. Circumcision of the heart means inward purity. Compare *Col. 2:11-12*. The work of God's Spirit. This contrasted with the letter of the Law. Compare *Phil. 3:3*; *Titus 3:5*; *Rom. 3:24*. This man receives his praise from God. Men may say evil things about one who is a true Jew, a spiritual descendant of Abraham, but God will approve him. The religious advantages which a Jew had, made him that much more guilty when he did not live up to what he knew. Compare *James 4:17* and note.

1. Do the Jews have any advantage? Paul's conclusions in *chapter 2* are contrary to what the Jews believed. We can imagine them asking: "If our advantages will be no help at Judgment, and Gentiles can also be accepted, what good is all this?"

2. In the first place. The advantage of the Jew is explained in *Rom. 9:4-5* and notes. Paul here mentions first: the message or God which is the Old Testament. Next to Christ and the New Testament, the Old Testament was God's greatest gift to mankind. It pointed forward to the Messiah, and gave a description of him so that he could be identified.

3. What if some? "Would not the unfaithfulness of some Jews invalidate God's promise?" The Jewish argument runs: "If some of the *chosen people* are lost through their unfaithfulness, doesn't this mean that God has not been faithful himself, since he promised to be a God to Abraham's descendants forever?"

4. Certainly not! [God forbid is not in the Greek.] God's promise was conditional (see *Deut. 28:1-14*), and required faith and obedience. "God is true to his promise even though every Jew were unfaithful and proved to be a liar by breaking the promise." The quotation is from *Psalms 51:4* in the Septuagint.

5 But what if our doing wrong serves to show up more clearly God's doing right? What can we say? That God does wrong when he punishes us? (I speak here as men do.) **6** By no means! If God is not just, how can he judge the world?

7 But what if my untruth serves God's glory by making his truth stand out more clearly? Why should I still be condemned as a sinner? **8** Why not say, then, "Let us do evil that good may come"? Some people, indeed, have insulted me by accusing me of saying this very thing! They will be condemned, as they should be.

But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

No One Is Righteous

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: **10** "There is no one righteous, not even one;

No Man Is Righteous

9 Well then, are we Jews in any better condition than the Gentiles? Not at all! I have already shown that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. **10** As the Scriptures say:

"There is no one who is righteous,

5. But what if our doing wrong? Israel is under judgment for rejecting Christ. The Jewish argument is: "If our sin in crucifying Christ blessed the whole world, and if our unbelief makes the faithfulness of God stand out; how can God punish us for this good work?" See also *Rom. 6:1-2*. (I speak here as men do.) That is, Paul is saying this is the human reasoning about this question.

6. By no means! God could not judge at all if he were unjust. Because he does judge, he cannot be unjust, even when he judges men whose sin may have helped fulfill the Plan.

7. But what if my untruth? It is plain that a charge of untruth was often made against Paul (*compare Gal. 1:20; Rom. 9:1*). No unbelieving Jew questioned the fact that Paul would come into judgment, in spite of the fact that his "faithlessness in becoming a Christian" had made the faithfulness of God to Israel stand out. Paul takes their idea that he is to be judged as a sinner and turns it on them. They believe he lied, but that some good came from it. Yet they condemn him as a sinner. This shows they already understand that even though good may come from sin, the sin is still not excused. [Scholars cannot agree on verses 7-8.]

8. Why not say, then? If judgment could be escaped by sinning to the glory of God, then we ought to do evil to produce good. The unbelieving Jews were telling people that Paul taught such a thing. **They will be condemned.** God's judgment on those who pervert the truth in such ways as this, is just! God does not permit sin (*1 Pet. 1:13-16*).

9. In any better condition? The Jew was surprised to see his advantages disappear. "Surely we Jews are in better condition than the Gentiles because of our *devoutness!*" **Not at all!** Paul makes this strong, because he has shown that both Jews and Gentiles are all under the power of sin. Not just simply sinful: all mankind are both guilty and unable to escape from that condition by themselves.

10. As the Scriptures say. Paul shows them from the Old Testament that no one is righteous before God (*by themselves*). He quotes language from *Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; etc.*, all from the Septuagint. **There is no one who is righteous.** If "righteous" means *completely free from sin*, then this is true of all mankind (see *1 John 1:8-10*). Only Jesus lived without sin. See *Heb. 4:15*.

¹¹no one who understands,
or who seeks for God.
¹²All men have turned away from God;
they have all gone wrong;
no one does what is good, not even one.
¹³Their mouths are like an open grave;
wicked lies roll off their tongues,
and deadly words, like snake's poison,
from their lips;
¹⁴ their mouths are full of bitter curses.
¹⁵They are quick to hurt and kill;
¹⁶ they leave ruin and misery wherever
they go.
¹⁷They have not known the path of peace,
¹⁸ nor have they learned to fear God."
¹⁹Now we know that everything in the Law
applies to those who live under the Law, in order
to stop all human excuses and bring the whole
world under God's judgment. ²⁰Because no man
is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law
requires; what the Law does is to make man
know that he has sinned.

there is no one who 11
understands,
no one who searches for
God.
All have turned away 12
and together become
worthless.
There is no one who does
good,
not even one."
"Their throats are open 13
graves;
their tongues practice
deceit."
"The poison of vipers is
on their lips."
"Their mouths are full 14
of cursing and
bitterness."
"Their feet are swift to 15
shed blood;
ruin and misery mark 16
their paths,
and the way of peace they 17
do not know."
"There is no fear of 18
God before their
eyes."

Now we know that what- 19
ever the law says, it says to
those who are under the law,
so that every mouth may be
silenced and the whole world
held accountable to God.
Therefore no one will be de- 20
clared righteous in his sight
by observing the law; rather,
through the law we become
conscious of sin.

11-18. These verses are a general statement of the condition of mankind. Wherever man goes, he leaves a trail of destruction and misery behind him. Human wickedness continually inflicts injury on others. Even when they are clearly shown the "path of Peace," they make themselves *blind* to it. **Nor have they learned to fear God.** This both sums up and explains why man is under the power of sin. When God is not feared [respected, worshiped], nothing else is; and with the final barrier down, sin comes in like a flood! Paul has proved from the Scriptures that no man is righteous!

19. **Now we know.** The things which Paul has just quoted are part of the Law, and apply to Jews. **To stop all human excuses.** Every excuse of the Jew has been demolished by the Law. **And bring the whole world.** Jews believed the Gentiles were already under God's judgment. Now they find that they themselves are also under God's judgment.

20. **Because.** Since Paul is speaking to Jews, he speaks of *the Law*, but this also can apply to law in general. In the present state of human nature, perfect obedience to law is impossible. **What the Law does.** The Law is a standard of measurement which makes man aware that he is a sinner, but does not offer him any hope of a way to escape from guilt.

How God Puts Men Right

²¹But now God's way of putting men right with himself has been revealed, and it has nothing to do with law. The Law and the prophets gave their witness to it: ²²God puts men right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: ²³all men have sinned and are far away from God's saving presence. ²⁴But by the free gift of God's grace they are all put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. ²⁵God offered him so that by his death he should become the means by which men's sins are forgiven, through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate his righteousness. In the past, he was patient and overlooked men's sins; ²⁶but now in the present time he deals with men's sins, to demonstrate his righteousness. In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus.

Righteousness Through Faith

But now a righteousness ²¹ from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes ²² through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have ²³ sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified ²⁴ freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God ²⁵ presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed ²⁶ beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.

21. **But now God's way.** The Law and God's promise were two different things. See what Paul says in *Gal. 3:17-18*. The Law and the prophets told that God would provide a righteousness that did not originate in law. See *Heb. 8:7-13* and notes.

22. **Through their faith in Jesus Christ.** Faith in Christ is the condition. In this sense it is faith alone which saves, but the faith which saves cannot be alone. See note on *James 2:19*. Faith is not a condition of *merit*, but of mercy. **There is no difference at all.** Both Jew and Gentile stand condemned by sin. Both must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved.

23. **All men have sinned.** *Beza* points out the symbolism in the Greek is of one whose strength fails him, and who falls behind in a race. The Jew was as far away from God's saving presence as was the Gentile.

24. **But by the free gift.** God acted in history through Jesus Christ to set men free from their sin. This is a free gift, because we did nothing to earn it! God had it all done before we found out about it! Compare *1 Cor. 2:7-10*.

25. **God offered him.** Blood is often the symbol of death, and it is by the death of Christ—the totality of his sacrifice—that he is the *means* [propitiation = means] by which sins are forgiven. Christ died so that we could live (see *2 Cor. 5:14-21; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 2:20*). What God has given to the world in Christ, infinitely great and absolutely free, is literally *nothing* unless it is *taken*. We must reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make ourselves part of it! **God did this.** The Jew despised God's patience with sinners (see *Rom. 2:4* and note). But *Heb. 9:15* shows it was on the basis of what Jesus *would do* that God was patient.

26. **But now.** In the past God overlooked men's sins and did not punish them immediately. But now, since the Cross and until time ends, God deals with men's sins. God's righteousness is demonstrated in the Cross, and we see that sin and salvation are not "make-believe!" At the same time, God accepts as righteous (PUTS RIGHT WITH HIMSELF) those who reach out through faith to make themselves part of Christ on the Cross and identify with his death (*Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-6*).

²⁷What, then, can we boast about? Nothing! And what is the reason for this? Is it that we obey the Law? No, but that we believe. ²⁸For we conclude that a man is put right with God only through faith, and not by doing what the Law commands. ²⁹Or is God only the God of the Jews? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Of course he is. ³⁰God is one, and he will put the Jews right with himself on the basis of their faith, and the Gentiles right through their faith. ³¹Does this mean that we do away with the Law by this faith? No, not at all; instead, we uphold the Law.

Where, then, is boasting? ²⁷ It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Is God the God ²⁹ of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is ³⁰ only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do ³¹ we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

27. **What, then, can we boast about?** Every law which requires HUMAN MERIT as a condition of salvation permits boasting and pride. The salvation which comes as a free gift through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which we seize through faith, gives us nothing to boast about.

28. **For we conclude.** He has proved that we are put right with God [justified] only through faith (which includes the obedience of faith). A clear line is drawn between faith and the works of the Law, as these represent two distinctly different religious systems, and this shows us that faith (and the obedience of faith) must not itself be interpreted as a *work of law*.

29. **Or is God only?** The only way to escape the conclusion of verse 28 would be to say that God is a God of the Jews only. Both Jew and Gentile can only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

30. **God is one.** Paul points to *Zech. 14:8-9* to prove that in the *new age* of Good News, God will gather all peoples together, and all will be put right with him through the *one rule* of faith (which includes the obedience of faith).

31. **Does this mean?** The Law = the whole Jewish religion. Does salvation by faith make the Law useless? The answer is no, not at all! The Law is upheld for the first time (*Rom 8:4* and note). See what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:17*, and compare the note there. To be *put right with God* is to be pronounced innocent or guiltless. Since no man could obey the Law perfectly (see *James 2:10* and note), no man could be put right with God through the works of the Law. As we reach out in faith to seize Christ, and make ourselves part of his sacrifice, his merit is **RITUALLY CREDITED** [*imputed*] to us and the Law cannot condemn us.

Three uses of law. 1. **A Fence.** Law serves the purpose of restraining sin and promoting righteousness. Considered from this point of view, law presupposes sin and is necessary on account of sin. It serves the purpose of God's common grace in the world at large. This means that, from this point of view, law cannot be regarded as a means of grace in the technical sense of the word. 2. **A Teacher.** In this capacity law serves the purpose of bringing man under conviction of sin, and of making him conscious of his *inability* to meet the demands of law. In that way law becomes his teacher to lead him *unto* Christ, and so becomes an *assistant* to God's gracious purpose of *setting men free from sin*. 3. **A Rule.** This is the so-called *third use of law*. The law of Christ (*1 Cor. 9:21*) is a rule of life for believers, reminding them of their duties and leading them in the way of life and salvation. The "obedience of faith" is not a thing of merit, but the *living sacrifice* of *Rom. 12:1-2; James 1:26-27; 2:14-17; etc.* This third use of law is denied by the Antinomians.

The Example of Abraham

4 What shall we say, then, of Abraham, our racial ancestor? What was his experience? ²If he was put right with God by the things he did, he would have something to boast about. But he cannot boast before God. ³The scripture says, "Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." "A man who works is paid; his wages are not regarded as a gift, but as something that he has earned. ⁵But the man who has faith, not works, who believes in the God who declares the guilty to be innocent, it is his faith that God takes into account in order to put him right with himself. ⁶This is what David meant when he spoke of the happiness of the man whom God accepts as righteous, apart from any works:

"Happy are those whose wrongs God has forgiven,
whose sins he has covered over!

Abraham Justified by Faith

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they whose offenses have been forgiven
and whose sins have been covered.

1. **Of Abraham, our racial ancestor.** Paul has said that being put right with God has nothing to do with the Law. It is through faith, from beginning to end (*Rom. 1:17*). Now he shows the example of Abraham. **What was his experience?** Paul asks: "Was Abraham put right with God by works of law, or by faith?"

2. **By the things he did.** If he was *put right with God* by his OWN MERIT, this would give him something to boast about. **But he cannot.** See *Rom. 3:19-20* and notes.

3. **The scripture says.** Paul quotes *Gen. 15:6* here, and in *Gal. 3:6*; also *James 2:23*. Abraham believed God's promise to him of a son by Sarah, and this faith was the basis on which God accepted him as righteous. Faith obeys (see note on *James 2:19*).

4. **A man who works is paid.** Lipscomb says: "If one relies on his own works to merit salvation, the reward is reckoned not as a favor [grace] from God, but as payment of debt for works. This is contrary to the whole principle of justification by grace. Man is a lost and helpless sinner, saved by the grace of God; but he must accept [seize it and make himself part of it] that favor by complying with the conditions God has enjoined [decreed] for his enjoying [receiving] it."

5. **But the man who has faith.** This speaks of the man who *does not* try to *earn* salvation through his own merit. If human merit were required for salvation, then no one could be saved at all because of the principle in *James 2:10*. Our actions can never be anything but imperfect (*1 John 1:8-10*). However, faith cannot be *perfect* EXCEPT through the *obedience of faith* (*James 2:19,23* and notes).

6. **This is what David meant.** Paul has shown us Abraham was *put right with God* through his faith, rather than through the things which he did. Now he shows us David speaking about the same faith.

7. **Whose sin he has covered over.** This uses the symbolism of the sacrifices of the Law in which the blood of the sacrifice *covered over* the *sins* so they could be forgiven.

thought of his body, which was already practically dead, or of the fact that Sarah could not have children. ²⁰His faith did not leave him, and he did not doubt God's promise; his faith filled him with power, and he gave praise to God. ²¹He was absolutely sure that God would be able to do what he had promised. ²²That is why Abraham, through faith, "was accepted as righteous by God." ²³The words "He was accepted as righteous" were not written for him alone. ²⁴They were written also for us who are to be accepted as righteous, who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from death. ²⁵He was given over to die because of our sins, and was raised to life to put us right with God.

Right with God

5 Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God

womb was also dead. Yet he ²⁰ did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded. ²¹ That God had power to do what he had promised. This ²² is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The ²³ words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to ²⁴ whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He ²⁵ was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Peace and Joy

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus

20. **His faith did not leave him.** He did not argue the impossibility of the promise, but waited patiently for it to come true!

21. **That God would be able to do.** He believed God had the ability to do this, and he believed that God would keep his promise to him.

22. **That is why.** Because he was absolutely sure! This faith demonstrated itself in everything he did.

23. **Were not written for him alone.** This speaks of the one who was inspired to write these words [Moses, in Gen. 15:6]. He pointed forward to Christ, and those who would be *accepted as righteous* through their faith in him.

24. **They were written also for us.** We are shown the example of Abraham so that we also might believe. Compare *Rom. 1:16-17*.

25. **He was given over to die.** See *Heb. 2:9-10*. This was God's act in Christ to *set men free*. When Christ was raised to life, this became the guarantee of all our hopes. Paul makes the *death, burial, and resurrection* the focal point of the Good News (*1 Cor. 15:1-4*). Note how he stresses the raising from death (*1 Cor. 15:12-20*). Note how he speaks about the act of baptism (*Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4*).

1. **Put right with God through faith.** Christ's sacrifice changes us, not God. The merit of Christ's *suffering* for us, makes it possible for us to be *put right with God through faith*. In our union with Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*), we are changed from enemies into friends. The *faith* which puts us right with God: (1) is a faith in Christ as the Messiah; (2) is a faith of the heart (*Rom. 10:9*) which brings the totality of our life into obedience (*Rom. 1:5*). *We have peace with God*. Outside of Christ, all are rebels against God and enemies. Inside of Christ (*Gal. 3:27*), forgiveness brings peace and we are friends. *Luther* says: "Thus we arrive at this result, viz., that faith justifies without any works, and yet it does not follow from this that we must not do any good works, but that genuine works will not be wanting [lacking]. Of these works those who are saints by their own merit know nothing; they frame up works of their own, in which there is neither peace, joy, assurance, love, hope, boldness, nor the quality of any genuine Christian work and faith." Compare *Rom. 10:1-4*.

through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²He has brought us, by faith, into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. We rejoice, then, in the hope we have of sharing God's glory! ³And we also rejoice in our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, ⁴endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. ⁵This hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

⁶For when we were still helpless, Christ died for the wicked, at the time that God chose. ⁷It is a difficult thing for someone to die for a righteous person. It may be that someone might dare to die for a good person. ⁸But God has shown us how much he loves us; it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! ⁹By his death we are now put right with God; how much more, then, will we be saved by him from God's wrath.

Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath

2. **Into this experience.** Christ brought us, by faith, into this experience of being "put right with God" and "peace." We reach out through faith to make ourselves part of the *experience* of Christ [which is extrinsic to ourselves] as we see from *Rom. 6:5-6*.

3-4. **And we also rejoice.** The Jews boasted about their happiness in the Law. They saw the Christian's *trouble* as a sign of God's disapproval. Not so, says Paul. **Trouble produces endurance, approval, hope,** as a chain of events. Compare *1 Thess. 3:3; Acts 5:41*.

5. **This hope.** The Jews hoped to be saved *because* they were Abraham's descendants. They would be disappointed (*Romans 9*). **God has poured out his love.** *MacKnight* says that ΕΚΚΕΧΥΤΑΙ points to the gifts from the Spirit given to the Gentiles *prove* to the Jews that God does love them. It also means *our awareness* that God loves us.

6. **For when we were still helpless.** Paul has already shown us that *both* Jew and Gentile were helpless under sin's power. It was at this point that God acted in history through Christ to set us free! Compare *Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 4:25*.

7. **It is a difficult thing.** While we may see a rare example of love in which someone gives up their life to save a good person's life, it is most unusual. This fact categorizes [defines] the amazing love of Christ!

8. **But God has shown us.** This act in history stands for all time as a *monument* to the *infinite love* of God! **It was while.** The false religions of the world show an angry god who must be appeased to escape his wrath. Christ shows us a God who acts in love to make it possible for his children to escape the judgment coming on sinful men. Compare *1 John 3:16-18*.

9. **By his death.** Blood = death. See *Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; 1 Pet. 2:24*. *Death* symbolizes the *totality* of Christ's sacrifice (of which blood is a part). *How much more, then.* If Christ died for us while we were still sinners, how much more will Christ save us from the wrath to come, now that we have been put right with God through his death and are not longer sinners,

¹⁰We were God's enemies, but he made us his friends through the death of his Son. Now that we are God's friends, how much more will we be saved by Christ's life! ¹¹But that is not all; we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has now made us God's friends.

Adam and Christ

¹²Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death spread to the whole human race, because all men sinned. ¹³There was sin in the world before the Law was given; but where there is no law, no account is kept of sins. ¹⁴But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses death ruled over all men, even over those who did not sin as Adam did by disobeying God's command.

Adam was a figure of the one who was to come.

through him! For if, when ¹⁰ we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, ¹¹ but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ

Therefore, just as sin ¹² entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—for before the law ¹³ was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death ¹⁴ reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses,

10. **But he made us his friends.** Christ's sacrifice does not change God, it changes us (2 Cor. 5:17). We had become God's enemy through our sins. We now become God's friends through the death of his Son. *MacKnight* sees in this a removing of the curse from all mankind - past, present, future - so that all have salvation available to them. Compare verse 18; Heb. 9:15; Eph. 2:16. **By Christ's life.** Compare Rom. 8:11; John 14:19; 1 Pet. 3:21.

11. **But that is not all.** Paul shows us that now the Gentiles can also boast and rejoice that the true God is their God and King and Father, because Christ has abolished the Jewish Law (Eph. 2:15).

12. **Sin came into the world through one man.** The remaining verses of this chapter induce profound theological questions. "Original sin," and "reprobation," as they are taught today are distortions of Bible teaching. A distinction must be made between *physical death* and *spiritual death*. (God knew before Creation that man would sin, and that he would make peace through the death of his Son. See 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:15-20.) **And his sin brought death with it.** The contrast is between Adam and Christ as each is the **PROXY** for the whole human race. Adam's sin brought physical death to all mankind. Gen. 3:20. **Because all men sinned.** *MacKnight* says: "The meaning is not, that death hath come on all because all have sinned actually; for infants, who have not sinned actually, die; but that they have sinned in Adam as their federal head [proxy]; that is, have involved in the consequences of his sin."

13. **There was sin.** Paul shows us that all mankind must have sinned in Adam (by proxy). Until law is given, no account is kept of sin. Yet death shows that sin was in the world from the time of Adam to Moses.

14. **Death ruled over all men.** None could escape death. Death ruled: (1) even though no law of commands had been given; (2) and no account of sins was kept; (3) even over infants and mental defectives who could not have sinned against natural law (compare Rom. 1:18-23). This shows that all did sin in Adam, who is the proxy of the whole human race. Each of us repeats the acts of Adam *in this sense*; we are born into this world untouched by personal sin. As we grow to accountability, we disobey God's command and become personally guilty. **Adam was a figure.** He was a figure of Jesus Christ. Each as a proxy acted for all mankind. Compare 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

¹⁵But the two are not the same, because God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. It is true that many men died because of the sin of that one man. But God's grace is much greater, and so is his free gift to so many men through the grace of one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁶And there is a difference between God's gift and the sin of one man. After the one sin came the judgment of "Guilty"; but after so many sins comes the undeserved gift of "Not guilty!" ¹⁷It is true that through the sin of one man death began to rule, because of that one man. But how much greater is the result of what was done by the one man, Jesus Christ! All who receive God's abundant grace and the free gift of his righteousness will rule in life through Christ.

¹⁸So then, as the one sin condemned all men, in the same way the one righteous act sets all

even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

But the gift is not like the ¹⁵ trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the ¹⁶ gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, ¹⁷ by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Consequently, just as the ¹⁸ result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act

15. Because God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. The sin of Adam is not contrasted here to the obedience of Christ; but the *penalty* of Adam's sin is contrasted with the *free gift* of grace through Christ's obedience. *Many men died.* The penalty of physical death came to all because of Adam's sin. *But God's grace is much greater.* In Christ we receive back much more than we lost in Adam. God's ACT in Christ will bring all out of the grave. To those who are *in Christ*, this ACT will bring much more!!!

16. And there is a difference. Adam's *one sin* brought the judgment of "Guilty" to all mankind. But the undeserved gift of "Not guilty!" after so many sins, comes through Christ's obedience.

17. Through the sin of one man. If this is compatible with justice (as *verse 12* shows), then the results of Christ's ACT are also compatible with justice. **ALL WHO RECEIVE.** This implies that the results of Christ's act are limited somewhat by the response of each individual. This would agree with *verse 1*. **God's abundant grace.** The raising from death (*verse 15*). This will mean different things to the believer and to the unbeliever (*John 5:28-29*). **His righteousness.** The undeserved gift of "Not guilty!" (*verse 16*). **Will rule in life through Christ.** "Eternal life begins now for those who are *in Christ!*"

18. So then. This is the second part of the comparison begun in *verse 12*. **As the one sin condemned.** Adam's sin brought physical death to all mankind. **The one righteous act.** *Shepherd* says: "What they [we] lost unconditionally in Adam, they [we] gained unconditionally in Christ." This means any "original sin" is canceled by Christ's act. However, until we are *put right with God through faith*, our personal sin still condemns us. *Lipscomb* says: "By the sin of Adam all die and go to the grave. The grace and gift of God must bring them out of the grave and restore them to life, so that all that was lost in Adam may be regained in Christ; but this is not a matter of debt, but of grace." **Christ's death brings:** (1) **LIFE.** All dead will be raised to life (*Rev. 1:7; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; John 5:28-29*). (2) **PARDON.** Full pardon for our guilt in Adam's sin. Therefore infants and mental defectives are sinless. (3) **LIFE.** Eternal life to those who have no personal sin. (4) **FORGIVENESS.** The opportunity to have personal sin canceled. *1 Pet. 3:21-22; Titus 3:4-7.*

men free and gives them life. ¹⁹And just as many men were made sinners as the result of the disobedience of one man, in the same way many will be put right with God as the result of the obedience of the one man.

²⁰Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing; but where sin increased, God's grace increased much more. ²¹So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God's grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin but Alive in Christ

6 What shall we say, then? That we should continue to live in sin so that God's grace will increase? ²Certainly not! We have died to sin—how then can we go on living in it? ³For surely you know this: when we were baptized into union

of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

6 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who

19. **Were made sinners.** By Adam's sin, all were counted sinners even though many of them never heard of Adam or his sin. **Will be put right.** All inherited penalty for Adam's sin is canceled for the whole human race (the dead will all be raised). All without personal sin are "Not guilty!" before God. God's terms of salvation are for those who have personally sinned. See *verse 1; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 24:47 and notes.*

20. **Law was introduced.** Not only the Law of Moses, but all divine law. The effect of its introduction was to increase wrongdoing. (See *Rom. 7:7-11*). This is speaking about each person's *personal sin*. **God's grace increased.** God offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who will reach out in faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ. Sin verifies the act of God in Christ.

21. **Just as sin ruled.** Death oppresses all! **Leading us to eternal life.** This is like a hymn of praise to God! Sin rules by death, God's grace rules by righteousness, and leads us to eternal life!!! (1) The number saved will be larger than the number lost. Since half of mankind dies in infancy, and, having no personal sin, will be saved (as we believe), the number lost may be no larger proportion than the inmates of a prison compared to the community. See *Rev. 7:9 and note.* (2) The Logos whom we know as Jesus Christ, by his act to set us free, exalts his people to a much higher level of spiritual development, than humanity would have reached, if unfallen. (3) The benefits of Christ's act to set us free extend beyond the human race. See *Rom. 8:19-22; Col. 1:20.*

1-2. **That we should continue to live in sin?** In *chapter 5* Paul showed us that man's sin provided a reason and a need for God's grace and mercy. Some said, "If that is true, then the more we sin, the more God can show his grace." **Certainly not!** [God forbid is not in the Greek.] Paul makes this plain: the Christian life begins with death to sin. In the next few verses, Paul shows us that in the act of baptism, we died to sin and divorced ourselves from it, and that we have been sealed with the death of Christ (see *note on Rev. 7:2-3*).

3. **For surely you know this.** He reminds them that they already know the meaning of baptism. **When we were baptized into union.** *John Wesley* wrote: "In baptism we, through faith, are ingrafted into Christ; and we draw new spiritual life from this new root, through his Spirit, who fashions us like unto him, and particularly with regard to his death and resurrection." **Into union with his death.** We contact the death of Christ in the act of baptism.

with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with his death. ⁴By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life.

⁵For if we became one with him in dying as he did, in the same way we shall be one with him by being raised to life as he was. ⁶And we know this: our old being has been put to death with Christ on his cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be the slaves of sin. ⁷For when a person dies he is set free from the power of sin. ⁸If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹For we know that Christ has been raised from death and will never die again—

were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 4

If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. 5 6 7

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over 8 9

4. **We were buried with him and shared his death.** A burial implies death. Baptism is a burial. As death and burial terminate physical life, Paul reasons, so should baptism into Christ terminate our "love affair" with sin. [The original *mode* of baptism was immersion - a burial in water (and the Spirit, *John 3:5*).] **In order that.** God's power raised Christ from death. He now lives a new life in heaven. Paul says this is what our baptism means to us. We die to sin, are buried, and raise from the liquid grave to live a new life. Compare *2 Cor. 5:17*.

5. **For if we became one with him.** "*Being raised to life*" is understood as a spiritual raising from death. The next verses show this. "*You were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins*" (see *Col. 2:11-13*). We reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ to make ourselves part of it. In the climax which is baptism, we die with Christ and are raised to life with Christ.

6. **And we know this.** In our baptism we were crucified with Christ. **The power of the sinful self.** Sin has taken possession of our bodies. When we are "*crucified*," sin can no longer make us its slave. As the crucified body of Christ was insensitive to external forces, so in our being crucified with Christ, we no longer respond to sin. [This does not mean we lose the ability to sin. Compare *Col. 3:5*; *1 John 1:8-10*. *Luther* says: "This teaches us that we are not so utterly freed from sin by faith that we can be *idle, lazy and secure*, as though sin did no longer exist."]

7. **For when a person dies.** The claim sin has over a person, ends at death. The death of a slave terminated his period of slavery.

8. **That we will also live with him.** Paul returns to his main line of reasoning. In baptism, the burial in the liquid grave climaxes in **EMERGING** from the water. This is both a symbolic and a real resurrection from the dead.

9. **For we know.** When Christ raised from death, death had no more claim over him. He now lives forever!!! We who have shared his death, must also share his eternal life!!! [On the time factor, see *1 John 3:1-3*.] Notice this also applies to the kind of life we live right now (compare *1 Cor. 6:15-20*).

death has no more power over him. ¹⁰The death he died was death to sin, once and for all; and the life he now lives is life to God. ¹¹In the same way you are to think of yourselves as dead to sin but alive to God in union with Christ Jesus.

¹²Sin must no longer rule in your mortal bodies, so that you obey the desires of your natural self. ¹³Nor must you surrender any part of yourselves to sin, to be used for wicked purposes. Instead, give yourselves to God, as men who have been brought from death to life, and surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes. ¹⁴Sin must not rule over you; you do not live under law but under God's grace.

Slaves of Righteousness

¹⁵What, then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law but under God's grace? By no

him. The death he died, he ¹⁰died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In the same way, count ¹¹yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin ¹²reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of ¹³your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have returned from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin ¹⁴shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

What then? Shall we sin ¹⁵because we are not under law but under grace? By no

10. **The death he died was death to sin.** Before Christ died, he was tempted in every way that we are (*Heb. 4:15*), and on the Cross was made to share our sin (*2 Cor. 5:21; compare Lev. 16:21-22*). After he died, sin could no longer make him its victim. Note that Christ raised from death in his **body** and went up to God in his resurrection **body**.

11. **In the same way.** This is the application of the first part of this chapter. The **essence** of our faith is a union to *him* in which *his experience* becomes ours. We die to sin in Christ's death; we become alive to God in Christ's resurrection [*Sanctification* is the believer taking *justification* seriously.]

12. **Sin must no longer rule.** This shows two possibilities: (1) one who has died with Christ and been raised to new life *could* still return to being the slave of sin (*compare Heb. 6:4-6*); (2) one who is new in Christ *has the option* of living a holy life. [Not the *ascetic* life of human holiness, but the *living sacrifice* of God's holiness.]

13. **Any part of yourselves.** The New Testament teaches a *wholistic* view of man (*1 Thess. 5:23*). Greek thought viewed man as a *soul* imprisoned in a *body of flesh*. The New Testament views man as a **UNITY** of body, soul, and spirit. It makes a lot of difference in our conduct, whether we view our bodies as a prison or a "temple of the Holy Spirit."

14. **Sin must not rule.** Law has no answer for the **power** of sin. It is not *restraint*, but *inspiration*, which sets us free from sin. But the way Paul says this raises the problem of *Rom. 3:8; 4:1* again. He uses the rest of this chapter to settle this question.

15. **What, then? Shall we sin?** Since we are not ruled by commandments of law, but by the **SENSE** of what we owe God for his free gift of grace, are we then to make a habit of sin??? Since God set us free at the Cross, are we to make a habit of sin??? **By no means!** This is Paul's inspired answer for all time! [*God forbid* is not in the Greek.]

means! ¹⁶Surely you know that when you surrender yourselves as slaves to obey someone, you are in fact the slaves of the master you obey—either of sin, which results in death, or of obedience, which results in being put right with God. ¹⁷But thanks be to God! For at one time you were slaves to sin; but then you obeyed with all your heart the truths found in the teaching you received. ¹⁸You were set free from sin and became the slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I use ordinary words because of the weakness of your natural selves. At one time you surrendered yourselves entirely as slaves to impurity and wickedness, for wicked purposes. In the same way you must now surrender yourselves entirely as slaves of righteousness, for holy purposes.

²⁰When you were the slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness. ²¹What did you gain from doing the things that you are ashamed of now? The result of those things is death! ²²But now you have been set free from sin and are the slaves of God; your gain is a life fully dedicated

means! Don't you know that ¹⁶when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks ¹⁷be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You ¹⁸have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

I put this in human terms ¹⁹because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness and holiness. When you were slaves to sin, ²⁰you were free from the control of righteousness. What ²¹benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But ²²now that you have been set free from sin and have be-

16. **That when you surrender yourselves.** If we make ourselves *slaves* to sin, death is the wage we receive! But if through obedience we make ourselves *slaves* to God, we will be put right with him and receive all his promises!

17. **But thanks be to God!** Paul gives thanks to God that his readers have already made their choice - to obey God! **The truths found in the teaching you received.** Paul points back to their baptism as a *point of obedience*. All the apostles taught the same truths (the Good News), so we find a parallel to this in *Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21 and notes*.

18. **You were set free from sin.** When they died to sin and were baptized into union with Christ's death (verses 3-4). **And became the slaves of righteousness.** "*You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price*" (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*);

19. **I use ordinary words.** He apologizes for using the slave-master relationship of human society to teach them a spiritual truth, but their moral weakness (as seen in their past lives) makes it necessary. **Slaves of righteousness.** This means to take God's work in Christ to set men free from sin as a *serious matter!* The Cross is not *make-believe!* The price paid shows God's valuation of we human beings.

20. **When you were slaves of sin.** It is a reasonable thing to devote yourself to God in righteousness, because when you were a slave of sin, you gave no obedience to righteousness.

21. **What did you gain?** Results show true value. They are now ashamed of their sinful acts. Sin brings death (eternal separation from God)!

22. **But now.** Because you have died to sin and are no longer its slave. **Your gain.** The result of a life dedicated to God is eternal life!

to him, and the result is eternal life. ²³For sin pays its wage—death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Illustration from Marriage

7 Certainly you understand what I am about to say, my brothers, because all of you know about law. The law rules over a man only as long as he lives. ²A married woman, for example, is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if he dies, then she is free from the law that bound her to him. ³So then, if she lives with another man while her husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is legally a free woman, and does not commit adultery if she marries another man. ⁴That is the way it is with you, my brothers. You also have died, as far as the Law is concerned, because you are part of the body of Christ; and now you belong to him who was raised from death in order that we might be

come slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. ²³

An Illustration From Marriage

7 Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. ²

So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the ³

23. For sin pays its wage - death. The slave of sin earns his own death. **But God's free gift.** Man has no ability to earn eternal life. What he cannot do for himself, God offers as a free gift through Jesus Christ. All have the right to come, and to accept the water of life as a gift (*Rev. 22:17*).

1. Certainly you understand. Paul uses an illustration from human life to show that the Christian is dead to the Law. *Luther* says: "When a husband dies, his wife, too, becomes free, and each is released from the other. Not in this sense, that the woman is not to take another husband, but rather in this sense, that she is now truly free to take another, which she could not do before she became released from her former husband." **Only as long as he lives.** Death released a man from the authority of the Law.

2. A married woman. The Jews believed that the Law of Moses formed a perpetual obligation. Paul uses marriage to teach them this lesson. **But if he dies.** The wife was united to her husband during his lifetime, but his death terminated the obligation, leaving her free to marry another.

3. While her husband is alive. She would be an adulteress, because she would be unfaithful to the law (marriage vows) that united her to her husband. Note that the Jewish Christians to whom Paul wrote believed that to abandon the Law of Moses was equal to spiritual adultery.

4. That is the way. "Since marriage is terminated by the death of either spouse, you Jews, who were married to God as your king, and obligated to obey the Law of Moses, are legally free from that marriage and Law." In becoming a Christian, they died with Christ (*Rom. 6:6*), and since the old relationship is terminated, the Law has no claim on them. **Now you belong to him.** [*Marriage is not in the Greek of this verse.*] The church is Christ's bride, however, here he speaks of the individual person being made to BELONG to Christ. He uses a Greek verb-form which points to a specific action in the past, which certainly identifies with *Rom. 6:5*. **In order that.** The law had no help to give the sinner. In Christ, we have much help (*Rom. 8:26; Gal. 5:22-26; etc.*).

useful in the service of God. ⁵For when we lived according to our human nature, the sinful desires stirred up by the Law were at work in our bodies, and we were useful in the service of death. ⁶Now, however, we are free from the Law, because we died to that which once held us prisoners. No longer do we serve in the old way of a written law, but in the new way of the Spirit.

body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by our sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Law and Sin

⁷What shall we say, then? That the Law itself is sinful? Of course not! But it was the Law that made me know what sin is. I would not have known what it is to covet if the Law had not said, "Do not covet." ⁸Sin found its chance to stir up all kinds of covetousness in me by working through the commandment. For sin is a dead

Struggling With Sin

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Far from it! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what it was to covet if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

5. For when we lived. Before we died with Christ. Stirred up by the Law. We would not recognize these desires, if the Law did not identify them (*Gal. 5:24; Rom. 7:9-10*).

6. We are free from the Law. See *Rom. 6:2-4*. But in the new way of the Spirit. This does not mean that the Jews under the Law did not worship God with spiritual worship. Yet the Law was directed toward weak human nature. In contrast to the *old life*, we have a new life in the Spirit (*2 Cor. 3:6*) which only our possession of the Spirit makes possible (*1 Cor. 2:13-15; 3:16-17; Rom. 8:1-4*).

7. That the Law itself is sinful? In verse 5 Paul said that the Law stirred up sinful desires. Of course not! Paul strongly denies that the Law itself was sinful. The restraint of law made him aware of his own sinful nature. [See notes on law at the end of chapter 3.] The experiences which he now gives as examples are those of Saul of Tarsus, yet they also are those of Paul the apostle as well. There is no such thing as the believer beoming "more and more just," [since his being just at all depends upon God's act in Christ], neither does the believer's nature become less and less sinful (*Gal. 5:16-18; 1 John 1:8-10*). Luther described the Christian as: SIMUL JUSTUS ET PECATOR (at the same time righteous and sinful). The Christian constantly fights against his own sinful human nature (*Rom. 8:10-18; 1 Pet. 4:1-2*).

8. Sin found its chance. Sin was given its chance by the commandment which had the effect of awakening and stirring up evil desires. God's word of command to Adam and Eve called their attention to the forbidden fruit. For sin is a dead thing. The restraint of law makes sin spring into life, because our human nature rebels against any restraint.

thing apart from law. ⁹I myself was once alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life, ¹⁰and I died. And the commandment which was meant to bring life, in my case brought death. ¹¹Sin found its chance and deceived me by working through the commandment; by means of the commandment sin killed me.

¹²So, then, the Law itself is holy, and the commandment is holy, right, and good. ¹³Does this mean that what is good brought about my death? By no means! It was sin that did it; by using what is good, sin brought death to me in order that its true nature as sin might be revealed. And so, by means of the commandment, sin is shown to be even more terribly sinful.

The Conflict in Man

¹⁴We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am

9
law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found 10
that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So 12
then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

13
Did that which is good, 13
then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

We know that the law is 14
spiritual; but I am unspirit-

9. **I myself was once alive.** *Gifford* says: "There is a deep tragic pathos in the brief and simple statement; it seems to point to some definite period full of painful recollections." This could be the time in youth when happy innocence is displaced by the moral conflicts and awareness of mature years. **But when the commandment came.** The Law makes sin a curse (*1 Cor. 15:56*). Without law, sin would have no strength to kill men, since sin is the violation of law.

10. **And I died.** The awareness of sin showed him under the sentence of death. It may have been when Christ said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute," that Paul first realized that "Christ has brought the Law to an end," and *he died*. **Which was meant to bring life.** The Law promised life (*Rom. 10:5*). **In my case brought death.** The Law is a curse to everyone who violates it.

11. **Sin found its chance.** Because men were under the Law, sin found its chance to first fool them and then to kill them. Yet this result is not due to the Law itself, since this would make God responsible for our sinning by giving the Law. Sin deceives us by: (1) making us think the demands of the law are unreasonable (*compare Gen. 3:5*); (2) to kill us by using the curse attached to the breaking of law.

12. **So then.** The Law itself is holy, even in its curse, as it restrains us from sin by its threat of punishment. Its moral requirements are holy, right, and good.

13. **Does this mean?** Paul has shown us that the Law is holy, right, and good, even though it stirs up evil desires. It was through the Law that sin killed him. But is the Law then death??? **By no means!** The problem is not the Law, but sin. Sin stirs up our human nature to rebel against the Law, to break it, and by this to place ourselves under the curse of the Law. **Sin is shown to be.** This is God's intention: that sin, by turning God's blessing into a curse, would clearly show what it is and ignite in us an urgent desire to escape from it.

14. **The Law is spiritual.** To show us that it is not God's Law, but rather sin that is the source of death, Paul points out the conflict in man. The Law requires actions which are spiritual, as our mind and conscience tells us. **But I am mortal man.** He means this in its worst sense (*compare Rom. 8:5-8*). **Sold as a slave to sin.** Obligated to do whatever evil actions he is prompted to do by sinful desires. Remember

mortal man, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵I do not understand what I do; for I don't do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate. ¹⁶When I do what I don't want to do, this shows that I agree that the Law is right. ¹⁷So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me. ¹⁸I know that good does not live in me—that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. ¹⁹I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. ²⁰If I do what I don't want to do, this means that no longer am I the one who does it; instead, it is the sin that lives in me.

²¹So I find that this law is at work: when I want to do what is good, what is evil is the only choice I have. ²²My inner being delights in the law of

ual, sold as a slave to sin. I 15
do not know what I am
doing. For what I want to do
I do not do, but what I hate
I do. And if I do what I do 16
not want to do, I agree that
the law is good. As it is, it is
no longer I myself who do it,
but it is sin living in me. I 17
know that nothing good
lives in me, that is, in my
sinful nature. For I have the
desire to do what is good,
but I cannot carry it out.
For what I do is not the good 18
I want to do; no, the evil I
do not want to do—this I
keep on doing. Now if I do 19
what I do not want to do, it
is no longer I who do it, but
it is sin living in me that
does it. 20

So I find this law at work: 21
When I want to do good,
evil is right there with me.
For in my inner being I de- 22

Luther's description of the Christian: "at the same time righteous and sinful." A Christian does not find life by trying to reform his human nature, nor by purifying his human nature from its sinfulness; but he gets above it and lives in a new existence in Christ. Paul explains this in *chapter 8*.

15. **I do not understand what I do.** The word "slavery" explains his actions. "As a slave, my actions are guided by someone else's will."

16. **When I do what I don't want to do.** He knows that sin is wrong, yet he goes on sinning (*compare I John 1:8-10*). The fact that he doesn't want to sin shows he agrees that the Law is right in its commands and its curse.

17. **So I am not really the one.** It is not "Paul the free-man" who sins, but "Paul the slave to sin." The sin that lives in us: (1) interferes with the good we would like to do; (2) like some evil spirit, it tries to destroy our spiritual nature; (3) tries to control us and take us to death (*verse 24*).

18. **In my human nature.** Compare *James 4:5*. See notes on *verse 14* of this chapter.

19. **I don't do the good.** This proves what he said in *verse 18*. How often we resolve to do better, and then give in to temptation when it comes. This repeats *verse 15*, but makes a stronger contrast between *good intentions and bad actions*.

20. **This means that no longer am I the one.** The same answer as *verse 17*. To be saved from sin, a man must at the same time *own it* [confess to it] and *disown it* [repudiate it]. This is the Christian paradox—to live in a condition of "confident despair."

21. **This law is at work.** This is similar to *verse 10*. "This is how I find the Law—or life under the rule of the Law—works out in actual practice: when I make up my mind to do good, evil is the only choice I have." Compare *verse 7 and note*.

22. **My inner being.** The *inner being* is not the same as the new nature; but is the side of human nature that is *tuned in* to God. Compare *Rom. 2:14*.

God. ²³But I see a different law at work in my body—a law that fights against the law that my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. ²⁴What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? ²⁵Thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ!

This, then, is my condition: by myself I can serve God's law only with my mind, while my human nature serves the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit

8 There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin

light in God's law; but I see ²³ another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! ²⁴ Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks ²⁵ be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I, of myself, in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Life Through the Spirit

8 Therefore, there is now ² no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law

23. **But I see a different law.** This continual conflict in man goes on between the *inner being* who delights in the law of God, and the law of sin and death which holds him prisoner.

24. **What an unhappy man I am!** This is the despair of natural man, held prisoner by sin, and unable to help himself. [The Christian also feels this constant struggle, but has hope in Christ.] **Who will rescue me?** The Law cannot help, because it is the curse of the Law which is about to kill him. See *verse 9*.

25. **Thanks be to God.** He has acted *already* to set us free! **Through our Lord Jesus Christ!** God sets us free through Jesus Christ! See *Romans 8:2*. **This, then is my condition.** *By myself* - without Christ's help—the best I can do is serve God's law with my mind, while the sin that lives in me perverts my weak human nature. *Luther* says: "*This struggle lasts as long as we live; it is more violent in one person, less so in another, according as the Spirit or the flesh grows stronger. And yet the entire person is himself both Spirit and flesh, struggling with himself until he becomes altogether spiritual.*" [By *flesh*, *Luther* means *human nature*.] Compare what Paul says in *Gal. 5:16-18*.

1. **There is no condemnation now.** Condemnation is in every sense out of the question! [But there are some qualifiers! See note on *James 2:19*.] In chapter 6, Paul shows us that in **BAPTISM**, the Christian dies to sin. In chapter 7, he shows us that this death terminates our "marriage" to the Law. In chapter 8, he shows us that the Holy Spirit living in each **CHRISTIAN** (*John 7:38-39; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:22*) breaks the power of sin and makes it possible to choose to obey God. **For those who live in union with Christ Jesus.** "No condemnation" applies only to those who are united to Christ in a living union. Compare *1 John 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:17*.

2. **For the law of the Spirit.** *Wesley* says: "Gospel has freed us from the Mosaic Law." The "law of the Spirit" is the **GOSPEL**, the Good News of God's act in Christ to set us free, including the facts, commands, and promises that form part of this. **Has set me free.** "In my union to Christ, I am already set free from the power of sin and the curse of the Law." *Lipscomb* says: "It is imagined that through the death of Christ in some way an indulgence from God was secured by which man might be allowed greater license in neglecting the law of God and in going his own way. This is a fatal mistake."

and death. ³What the Law could not do, because human nature was weak, God did. He condemned sin in human nature by sending his own Son, who came with a nature like man's sinful nature to do away with sin. ⁴God did this so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied in us who live according to the Spirit, not according to human nature. ⁵Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants. ⁶To have your mind controlled by human nature results in death; to have your mind controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace.

of sin and death. For what ³ the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by our sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law ⁴ might be fully met in us, who do not live according to our sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according ⁵ to their sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful ⁶ man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is

3. What the Law could not do. The Law, which Jews were so proud of, could not change human nature. It had no real answer for the problem of sin and death. It was not the righteous demands of the Law that were weak, but human nature. There were many devout and holy men under the Law, but the fact that they were *friends of God* was due to the grace that would come through Christ (*Gal. 3:8; Heb. 9:15*). **By sending his own son.** God acted in history by sending the Eternal Logos in human form with *exactly the same nature as ours!* The Son of God could take the humanity of his human mother Mary without any sinfulness. Some teach "original sin" to mean that sin itself is *built into* human nature, and this requires them to invent an "immaculate conception" for Mary to explain the sinlessness of Jesus. But *not sin itself*; only the guilt and destruction it brings, forms part of our human nature. **To do away with sin.** He did this by: (1) his sinless life (under human limitations); (2) his death to cancel sin; (3) his rising from death to life, which we can reach out and seize through faith (*Rom. 6:4*).

4. So that the righteous demands of the Law. Paul said the Law was spiritual (*Rom. 7:12, 14*). It offered life to all who kept it PERFECTLY, but cursed all who violated its righteous demands. Christ fulfilled the Law (gave it real meaning) in the fact that he perfectly kept all of its righteous demands! When Christ, as the Proxy of all mankind, fulfilled the Law, it was just as if every man had fulfilled the Law. When Christ died to pay the Law's penalty for sin, it was just as if every sinner had died and paid for his sins. Paul reminds us of this in *2 Cor. 5:14, 21*. **Who live according to the Spirit.** *Beza* pictures the believer as absolutely passive in satisfying the righteous demands of the Law in Christ. It is true that our salvation is ENTIRELY due to God's act in Christ, yet we have been set free from the power of sin and the curse of death IN ORDER THAT we may live according to the Spirit. *Luther's* comment helps us put it in the right perspective: "This Spirit makes us spiritual, subdues the flesh [human nature], and assures us that as long as we follow the Spirit, resist sin, and endeavor to slay it, we are, nevertheless, the children of God, no matter how violently sin rages in us." See *James 2:22-23*.

5. As their human nature tells them to. Those who live without Christ are described in *Gal. 5:19-21*. **As the Spirit tells them to.** The Spirit tells us what we should know through the *written word!* It is not *fear of punishment* which makes us live as the Spirit tells us, but *LOVE* (*1 John 4:18*).

6. To have your mind controlled. Compare what Jesus said in *Matt. 6:24*, and see note there. Allowing our human nature to make us its slave, brings death. Allowing the Spirit to make us his "slave" brings life and peace! The quality of our faith is demonstrated in our life.

⁷And so a man becomes an enemy of God when his mind is controlled by human nature; for he does not obey God's law, and in fact he cannot obey it. ⁸Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.

⁹But you do not live as your human nature tells you to; you live as the Spirit tells you to—if, in fact, God's Spirit lives in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ lives in you, although your bodies are going to die because of sin, yet the Spirit is life for you because you have been put right with God. ¹¹If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you.

¹²So then, my brothers, we have an obligation, but not to live as our human nature wants us to. ¹³For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if, by the Spirit, you kill

life and peace, because the ⁷ sinful mind is hostile to God, it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by their ⁸ sinful nature cannot please God.

You, however, are controlled ⁹ not by your sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your ¹⁰ body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his ¹¹ Spirit, who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we ¹² have an obligation—but it is not to our sinful nature, to live according to it. For if ¹³ you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

7. **And so a man becomes an enemy of God.** Human nature is hostile to God. All who ALLOW themselves to be slaves to their human nature find it impossible to obey God's law.

8. **Cannot please God.** No one, in all ages of time, could ever please God by allowing the evil desires of human nature to control himself.

9. **But you do not live.** "You can please God, because you are not controlled by your human nature." He speaks to those who have been set free from the law of sin and death. **If, in fact, God's Spirit lives in you.** See verse 16. **The Spirit of Christ** = the Spirit of God = the Holy Spirit. *Shepherd* says: "The possession of the Holy Spirit is declared to be absolutely necessary to our being acceptable to God." See *Gal. 4:6*.

10. **But if Christ lives in you.** Both God and Christ live in the Christian through the Holy Spirit (*Eph. 2:22*). Note that "God's Spirit lives in you," "have the Spirit of Christ," and "Christ lives in you," all express the same important fact. **Are going to die.** Not "dead in sin," nor "dead to sin," but all will die physically because of the sin of Adam (*Rom. 5:17*). **Yet the Spirit is life.** This is in contrast to the phrase: "are going to die." This is explained in verse 11.

11. **If the Spirit of God.** *Lipscomb* says: "The Holy Spirit actually dwells in every obedient believer." **Who raised Jesus from death.** See *John 5:21, 28, 29*. **Will also give life to your mortal bodies.** Compare *Eph. 1:13-14; 1 John 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:12-20*.

12. **We have an obligation.** Our HOPE in Christ obligates us to him! But we have no such obligation to our human nature.

13. **For if.** After dying with Christ, you could return to sin and let your human nature drag you down to death (*2 Pet. 2:20-22*). **But if, by the Spirit.** Note it is not your *mortal body* which you *kill*, but the *SINFUL ACTIONS* of your human nature. We cannot do this by our own strength. We do it with the help of the Holy Spirit.

your sinful actions, you will live. ¹⁴Those who led by God's Spirit are God's sons. ¹⁵For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you a slave and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's sons, and by the Spirit's power we cry to God, "Father! my Father!" ¹⁶God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children. ¹⁷Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you have received the Spirit who makes you sons. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Future Glory

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of

The Future Glory

¹⁸I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. ¹⁹All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his

14. **Those who are led.** See *Acts 10:34-35*. How are they led? (1) They have given themselves as "slaves" to God; (2) the Holy Spirit is their Helper (*verse 26*). Compare *Phil. 2:12-13*. **God's sons.** Compare *John 3:5*.

15. **Does not make you a slave.** *Slave* is contrasted with *son*. In the world of the first century, about half the population were slaves. They knew the fear and terror of slavery. This is not what God's Spirit gives. Christians are God's sons (and daughters) through the Spirit. Compare *Gal. 4:6* **Father! My Father!** We have both the status and the spirit of sons! Paul is pointing back to their baptism (*Rom. 6:5-6; Acts 2:38* and notes) as the time they were *adopted* into the family of God and received the Holy Spirit.

16. **To declare that we are God's children.** See *2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14*. *Lipscomb* says: "The Spirit gives directions through the word of truth how to become children of God. Our spirits bear witness as to whether from the heart we have complied with these conditions, and so they jointly bear testimony that we are children of God."

17. **Since we are his children.** He speaks to those who can look back to a point in time where they were adopted as God's children. See note on *Col. 2:12*. **We will possess the blessings.** A son inherits everything his father has. We, as God's children, will inherit the riches of Eternity! Everything that belongs to Christ as a natural son, belongs to us as well, in our union with him. **For if we share Christ's suffering.** Compare *1 Thess. 3:3* and note.

18. **I consider.** "The thoughts of suffering with Christ should not terrify you." Paul gives three reasons: (1) the groaning of creation (*verses 19-22*); (2) we groan as we wait in hope (*verses 23-25*); (3) the groaning of the Holy Spirit, who is our prayer-partner (*verses 26-27*). **Cannot be compared at all.** See *2 Cor. 4:16-18*.

19. **All of creation waits.** *Chrysostom* says: "Paul personifies the world, just as the prophets do when they make the floods to clap their hands." The total created universe looks forward to that time when God's children will have reached their climax and be revealed in all their glory! Compare *Col. 1:20*.

sons. ²⁰For creation was condemned to become worthless, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was this hope, ²¹that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay, and share the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²²For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain like the pain of childbirth. ²³But not just creation alone; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his sons and set our whole being free. ²⁴For it was by hope that we were saved; but if we see what we hope for, then it is not really hope. For who hopes for something that he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak that we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us, in groans that words cannot express.

God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know how

20. **For creation was condemned.** *Lipscomb* says: "As a result of Adam's sin, the whole creation was cursed and fell away from its original design and became subject to the reign of death." "*Was condemned*" points back to the sin of Adam, when God cursed the earth (and all creation). See *Gen. 3:17; Isa. 24:6; Jer. 12:4*. **Yet there was this hope.** Even before creation, it was decided that Christ would come as the "second Adam." *Gen. 3:15* is a promise.

21. **That creation itself.** This *ties in* with the promise of *Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1*.

22. **All of creation groans with pain.** These groans of pain are a prophecy of the time of future freedom!

23. **We who have the Spirit.** This is Paul's second reason (see *verse 18*). This also points to the glorious future! **As the first of God's gifts.** *APARCHE - FIRST-PORION* (Jewish term for anything set apart to God before the remainder could be used). The Spirit is the guarantee that we will receive everything God has for us. **We also groan.** We have experienced this new life in the Spirit, and this makes us want to escape from this life and rise triumphant in our new bodies. Therefore, we groan as we wait in hope. **And set out whole being free.** Only after death is destroyed, can we be totally free. Compare *Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:51; 2 Cor. 5:2*.

24. **For it was by hope.** In the Bible, "hope" is something you expect to happen. We are "put right with God" now, and we are children of God now! However, our whole being has not been set free yet, and we look into the future *expecting* this to happen! *Verses 24-25* explain the "we wait" of *verse 23*.

25. **But if we hope.** Read the introduction to Revelation. Without hope, we would sink into despair!

26. **In the same way.** This is Paul's third reason (see *verse 18*). The Spirit himself helps our weakness and is our prayer-partner. *R. W. Dale* wrote: "The whole passage illustrates in even a startling manner the truth and reality of the 'coming' of the Holy Spirit - the extent to which, if I may venture to say it, He has separated Himself - as Christ did at His Incarnation - from His eternal glory and blessedness, and entered into the life of man . . . His intercession for us - so intimately does He share all the evils of our condition - is a kind of *agony*."

²⁷And God, who sees into the hearts of men, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will.

²⁸We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose. ²⁹Those whom God had already chosen he had also set apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many brothers. ³⁰And so God called those that he had set apart; and those that he called he also put right with himself; and with those that he put right with himself he also shared his glory.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

³¹Faced with all this, what can we say? If God

we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. 27

More than Conquerors

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. 29

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against 31

27. **And God . . . knows.** Neither the Spirit nor Christ plead with God for men in general, but only for those who are united to Christ - his people. Only Jesus brings God and men together [mediator] (*1 Tim.* 2:5), but others can plead with God for us (compare *Gen.* 18:23-33). Even though we cannot find words to pray, or are ignorant of the true nature of things (such as in a crisis), the Holy Spirit is our prayer-partner, and pleads with God for us. **And in accordance with his will.** This is explained in the next verse.

28. **We know that in all things.** God is able to use suffering, sadness, poverty, imprisonment, death, etc., to call his people to Eternity. "Every problem contains an opportunity, and every opportunity contains a problem." Compare *2 Cor.* 7:9-11; *Acts* 28:16 and note. **Those whom he has called.** The best comment on this is *2 Thess.* 2:13-14. See notes there also.

29. **Had already chosen.** Lipscomb understands this in the sense of *Heb.* 11:39-40. That is, the men of the Old Testament who "would be made perfect only with us." Add to this the men of old who raised from death after Jesus' resurrection (*Matt.* 27:52-53), who Lipscomb thinks went into Eternity with Jesus. All this, then, is strong proof that "God works for good with those who love him." Johnson sees in this a "choosing on the basis of foreknowledge." Compare *Psalms* 139:16: "You saw me before I was born. The days that had been created for me had all been recorded in your book, before any of them had ever begun." See also *Rev.* 13:8; 17:8; 21:27. A third factor is that we had nothing to do with the planning of God's act in Christ to set us free. In this sense, the whole thing is taken out of our hands. The truth of *Rom.* 5:18 was an accomplished fact before mankind found out about it. Compare *1 Thess.* 5:9-10.

30. **He also shared his glory.** We can imagine God saying: "I see that you love me and believe in Christ; and therefore I decree that you will become like My Son and share His glory."

31. **Faced with all this, what can we say?** He has shown us God's love and mercy, and the future glory of God's people. **If God is for us?** No doubt about it! God is for us (who believe in him). **Who can be against us?** No one, man or angel or Devil, can cheat us of our promise in Christ! They may persecute us, and even kill us physically, but because we are united to Christ, they cannot destroy our relationship with him! [But we can ourselves.]

is for us, who can be against us? ³²He did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? ³³Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! ³⁴Can anyone, then, condemn them? Christ Jesus is the one who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God. He pleads with God for us! ³⁵Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship, or persecution, or hunger, or poverty, or danger, or death? ³⁶As the scripture says,

“For your sake we are in danger of death the whole day long; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! ³⁸For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life; neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers; neither the present

us? He who did not spare his 32
own Son, but gave him up
for us all—how will he not
also, along with him, gra-
ciously give us all things?
Who will bring any charge 33
against those whom God has
chosen? It is God who justi-
fies. Who is he that con- 34
demns? Christ Jesus, who
died—more than that, who
was raised to life—is at the
right hand of God and is
also interceding for us. Who 35
shall separate us from the
love of Christ? Shall trouble
or hardship or persecution
or famine or nakedness or
danger or sword? As it is 36
written:

“For your sake we face death all the day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we 37
are more than conquerors
through him who loved us.
For I am convinced that nei- 38
ther death nor life, neither
angels nor demons, neither
the present nor the future,

32. **He did not even keep back his own Son.** If he gave his Son to die for us, it is impossible that God would be against us or cancel his promises.

33. **Who will accuse God's chosen people.** Neither God nor Christ will do this, and Satan cannot, since we are pronounced “Not Guilty.” This shows how *secure* we are in God's love!!! But note we are still responsible for our own actions (*Heb. 6:4-6; Rom. 2:5-6; Matt. 12:41-42*).

34. **Can anyone, then, condemn them?** See *Rom. 8:1*.

35. **Who, then, can separate us?** No external force or condition can do it!!! The Book of Revelation is written to show us the victory that is already won in Christ!!! It may *look like* the Devil is winning, but Christ conquered the Devil at the Cross and the Empty Tomb!!!

36. **As the scripture says.** He quotes *Psalms 44:22* in the Septuagint, to show that the suffering mentioned in *verse 35* is in perfect harmony with God's promises.

37. **No, in all these things.** Suffering will not cause us to abandon Christ! **We have complete victory!** The ordeal of suffering not only *does not cut us off* from Christ's love, but it actually gives us more intimate [intrinsic] and thrilling experiences of it!!!

38. **For I am certain.** Paul is certain that no hostile power in all the universe can separate us from his love!!! **Neither death nor life.** These go in pairs. “If Christ's love can hold us in and through death, what is left for us to fear?” See *John 8:51; 10:28; 11:25; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Heb. 2:14-15*. **Neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers.** Good and bad angels (see *Eph. 6:12*). **Neither the present nor the future.** Whatever happens. *1 Cor. 3:22*.

nor the future; ³⁹neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

God and His Chosen People

9 What I say is true; I belong to Christ and I do not lie. My conscience, ruled by the Holy Spirit, also assures me that I am not lying. ²How great is my sorrow, how endless the pain in my heart for my people, my own flesh and blood! ³For their sake I could wish that I myself were under God's curse and separated from Christ. ⁴They are God's chosen people; he made them his sons and shared his glory with them; he made his covenants with them and gave them the Law; they have the true worship; they have re-

nor any powers, neither ³⁹ height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's Sovereign Choice

9 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—I have great ² sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I ³ could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. ⁴ Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

39. Neither the world above nor the world below. No limitations of time or space. **There is nothing.** This shows our promise through Christ!!! God gives us his love through Jesus Christ, and Paul sings his praises in these last eight verses!!! Only Eternity will show us the completeness of God's love in Christ to us.

1. What I say is true. Paul implied in *Rom. 3:3* that God would reject the Jewish Nation because they disbelieved Christ. Some Jews then said: "If this is true, then God has broken his own promise and repudiated his own chosen people." To answer this, Paul shows: (1) the promise was not to all of the descendants of Abraham; (2) God has the right to choose whoever he wants to. Individual or personal "election" is not the subject here. Paul looks at the choosing of the Jews, their rejection later, and the choosing of the Gentiles. Paul speaks so strongly in chapters 9, 10, 11, because his fellow Jews were saying he was a traitor to his nation.

2. How great is my sorrow! Because many of his nation were without the blessing of Christ.

3. For their sake. What he says is that he would be willing to be under God's curse himself and lost eternally, if it would help to bring his nation to Christ!!! This shows how much he loved his Jewish race!

4. They are God's chosen people. In *verses 4-5*, Paul speaks about the honor which God gave Israel. "Israel" means "a Prince with God." *He made them his sons.* (*Deut. 7:6*). This is not Christian sonship, but the sonship mentioned in *Exod. 4:22; Hosea 11:1* in which every Israelite was a son (*Hosea 1:10*). *Shared his glory with them.* The Shekinah of God's presence, the box of the covenant, etc. See *1 Sam. 4:21; Heb. 9:1-5*. **He made his covenants with them.** With Abraham, and at Sinai. **Gave them the Law.** "The holy law made and given by God" (*2 Maccabees 6:23*). The Law was a "GOOD LUCK CHARM" to the Jew (see *Rom. 2:17*). **The true worship.** Compare *John 4:22*. **God's promises.** Especially the promise of the Messiah.

ceived God's promises; ⁵they are descended from the patriarchs, and Christ, as a human being, belongs to their race. May God, who rules over all, be praised forever! Amen.

⁶I am not saying that the promise of God has failed; because not all the people of 'Israel are the chosen people of God. ⁷Neither are all Abraham's descendants the children of God. God said to Abraham, "The descendants of Isaac will be counted as yours." ⁸This means that the children born in the natural way are not the children of God; instead, the children born as a result of God's promise are regarded as the true descendants. ⁹For God's promise was made in these words: "At the right time I will come back and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁰And this is not all. For Rebecca's two sons

Theirs are the patriarchs, ⁵ and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

It is not as though God's ⁶ word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because ⁷ they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "Through Isaac shall your offspring come." In other words, it is ⁸ not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. For this ⁹ was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son."

Not only that, but Rebecca's ¹⁰ children had one and the same father, our ances-

5. **From the patriarchs.** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The sons of such fathers were forfeiting everything for which their ancestors had been chosen! **And Christ.** As a human being, Jesus belonged to their race, the tribe of Judah, a descendant of David the king. **May God.** [The best Greek texts make this refer to the father.] Paul's purpose is to imply that the tragic apostasy of the Jews (*verses 2-3*) is itself part of the "master-plan" of God. Compare *Rev. 5: Rom. 11:11-12*. God is able to bring good out of evil.

6. **I am not saying.** The Jew might say: "If Israel had such honor from God, why is the nation rejected? If Jesus really is the Messiah, has God canceled his promises?" Paul uses the rest of this chapter to answer this. **Because not all the people of Israel.** God's promise will not fail, even if the Jewish Nation is rejected. They do not make up the whole chosen people of God.

7. **Neither are all Abraham's descendants.** Ishmael and others were Abraham's children (*1 Chron. 1:28, 32*). **The descendants of Isaac.** The promise did not come through the children of Ishmael or the sons of Keturah.

8. **This means.** This illustrates the contrast between the natural family-line of race, and the spiritual family-line of *faith*. This destroys the claim of the Jews: "Abraham is our ancestor" (*Matt. 3:9 and note*).

9. **For God's promise.** This promise made the birth of Isaac *supernormal*. Isaac is called: "his only son" (*Heb. 11:17*); even though Abraham had other sons; because Isaac was the son of promise. Only the children by God's promise are the "chosen people." Christians are children by God's promise (*Gal. 4:28*).

10. **And this is not all.** The Jew might say: "Ishmael was illegitimate and had no rights. We are legitimate descendants of the patriarch and have 'Chosen People' status." Paul now shows that God has the right to reject any nation, including the Jews, and to choose other people, if it suits his purpose. **Isaac** was the father of Rebecca's twin sons.

had the same father, our ancestor Isaac. ¹¹⁻¹²But in order that the choice of one son might be completely the result of God's own purpose, God said to her, "The older will serve the younger." He said this before they were born, before they had done anything either good or bad; so God's choice was based on his call, and not on anything they did. ¹³As the scripture says, "I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau."

¹⁴What shall we say, then? That God is unjust? Not at all. ¹⁵For he said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I wish, I will take pity on whom I wish." ¹⁶So then, it does not depend on what man wants or does, but only on God's mercy. ¹⁷For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I made you king for this very purpose, to use you to show my power, and to make my name known in all the

tor Isaac. Yet, before the 11
twins were born or had done
anything good or bad—in
order that God's purpose in
election might stand: not by 12
works but by him who
calls—she was told, "The
older will serve the younger."
Just as it is written: "Jacob 13
I loved, but Esau I hated."

What then shall we say? 14
Is God unjust? Not at all!
For he says to Moses, 15

"I will have mercy on
whom I have mercy,
and I will have compas-
sion on whom I have
compassion."

It does not, therefore, de- 16
pend on man's desire or
effort, but on God's mercy.
For the Scripture says to 17
Pharaoh: "I raised you up
for this very purpose, that I
might display my power in
you and that my name might
be proclaimed in all the

11-12. **But in order that.** The only possible basis of choice would seem to be on the "priority of birth," yet God ignored this to choose Jacob. It may be said that God chose between them because of what they would do (see note on *Rom. 8:29*). Yet Paul uses this to show that God's choice was not based on either family-line or actions.

13. **As the scripture says.** [*Malachi 1:2* Septuagint.] *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "Yet it would not be right to say that Paul is here considering merely the parts assigned by God to nations in the drama of providence; He is obviously thinking of Jacob and Esau as individuals, whose own relation to God's promise and inheritance (involving no doubt that of their posterity [descendants]) was determined by God before they were born or had done either good or ill. On the other hand, it would not be right to say that Paul here refers the eternal salvation or perdition [condemnation] of individuals to an absolute decree of God which has no relation to what they are or do, but rests simply on His inscrutable will."

14. **That God is unjust?** God treats all men on the same basis (*Acts 10:34-35*). The Jew would say that God was being unjust, if he did not choose on the basis of family-line or actions. Paul shows now that the Jewish Scriptures [the Old Testament] declare God's right to do this. **Not at all.** It is not possible for God to be unjust. [*God forbid* does not appear in the Greek.]

15. **For he said to Moses.** [*Exod. 33:19* Septuagint.] He said this in answer to Moses' prayer. The point is that in *having mercy*, God is influenced by nothing outside of *his mercy* itself.

16. **So then.** This repeats the reasoning of *verses 11-13*. Esau was Isaac's favorite son and the one first-born. Esau acted to receive his *birthright*. Yet God was influenced by none of this, and blessed Jacob.

17. **For the scripture says to Pharaoh.** It does not say Pharaoh was *born* for this purpose, but that he was made king. [Compare Christ's choice of Judas (*John 6:64, 70, 71; 2 Tim. 2:19-21*).]

world." ¹⁸So then, God has mercy on whom he wishes, and he makes stubborn whom he wishes.

God's Wrath and Mercy

¹⁹One of you, then, will say to me, "If this is so, how can God find fault with a man? Who can resist God's will?" ²⁰But who are you, my friend, to talk back to God? A clay pot does not ask the man who made it, "Why did you make me like this?" ²¹After all, the man who makes the pots has the right to use the clay as he wishes, and to make two pots from the same lump of clay, one for special occasions, and the other for ordinary use.

²²And the same is true what God has done. He wanted to show his wrath and to make his power known. So he was very patient in enduring those who were the objects of his wrath, who were

earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

One of you will say to me: ¹⁹"Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, ²⁰O man, to talk back to God?

"Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" ²¹Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

What if God, choosing to ²²show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for des-

18. **God has mercy on whom he wishes.** God's mercy and wrath are not influenced by human claims. The "making stubborn" of Pharaoh is explained by *2 Thess. 2:10-12*. *Godet* says that Paul is not writing theology here, but answering the proud claims of Jewish *pharisaism*, showing that no human can place an obligation on God by anything he does or says or is. For a Jew, the contrast between the examples of Moses and Pharaoh are proof, interpreted by the words of God himself. But Paul neither raises nor answers the questions of exactly what the "making stubborn" means, nor the relationship between God "making Pharaoh stubborn," and Pharaoh making himself stubborn. The Jews thought that God **COULD NOT** abandon them, and that he would not accept the Gentiles.

19. **One of you, then.** "If the character of Moses and Pharaoh are **ENTIRELY** the result of God's will, doesn't the difference between them disappear? Doesn't this make men the helpless tools of God? How can he find fault with them?" Paul does not answer this objection, but says in effect: "Even if that is true, what right has the Jewish Nation to object to it? It is a lump of clay in the hands of the man who makes pots."

20. **To talk back to God?** He has the right to decree the terms of his own mercy.

21. **After all.** Not the quality of the clay, but the will of the man who makes the pots, decides what use will be made of each part of the lump. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "True, the objector might say, but irrelevant. For man is not clay, and the relation of God to man is not that of the potter to dead matter. To say that it is, is just to concede the objector's point - the moral significance is taken out of life, and God has no room any longer to pronounce moral judgments, or to speak of man in terms of praise or blame." [Christians have argued for centuries over the exact relation between God's **SOVEREIGN WILL** and man's **FREE WILL**.]

22. **He wanted to show.** "God's will in relation to man is difficult to understand, but if his actual treatment of them is "patient in enduring," what can you say against that?" [Destroyed = condemned to hell.] God's long history of patience with the Jewish Nation is probably in Paul's mind at this point.

ready to be destroyed. ²³And he wanted also to reveal his rich glory, which was poured out on us who are the objects of his mercy, those of us whom he has prepared to receive his glory. ²⁴For we are the ones whom he called, not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles. ²⁵This is what he says in the book of Hosea,

"The people who were not mine,
I will call 'My People.'

The nation that I did not love,
I will call 'My Beloved.'

²⁶And in the very place where they were told, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called the sons of the living God."

²⁷And Isaiah exclaims about Israel, "Even if the people of Israel are as many as the grains of sand by the sea, yet only a few of them will be saved; ²⁸for the Lord will quickly settle his full account with all the world." ²⁹It is as Isaiah had said before, "If the Lord Almighty had not left us some descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."

struction? What if he did this ²³
to make the riches of his
glory known to the objects of
his mercy, whom he pre-
pared in advance for glory—
even us, whom he also ²⁴
called, not only from the
Jews but also from the Gen-
tiles? As he says in Hosea: ²⁵

"I will call them 'my
people' who are not
my people;
and I will call her 'my
loved one' who is not
my loved one,"

and, ²⁶

"It will happen that in
the very place where it
was said to them,

'You are not my people,
they will be called 'sons
of the living God.' "

Isaiah cries out concern- ²⁷
ing Israel: "Though the
number of the Israelites
should be like the sand by
the sea, only the remnant
will be saved. For the Lord ²⁸
will carry out his sentence on
earth with speed and final-
ity."

It is just as Isaiah said pre- ²⁹
viously:

"Unless the Lord All-
powerful had left us
descendants,

23. And he wanted also to reveal. This completes the thought in *verse 22*. God: (1) shows his wrath and power; (2) reveals his rich glory. But in both of these, God acts in such a way that not only can man *not* complain, but must stand in amazement and worship!!!

24. For we are the ones. This explains the "on us" of *verse 23*. The fact that those called are from among both Jews and Gentiles shows that no one can claim God's mercy as a right of his racial heritage! *Johnson* sees in this a restraining of the destruction of the Jewish Nation until the entire world heard the Good News of Christ (*Compare Matt. 24:14; Col. 1:23*).

25-26. This is what he says. [Verse 25 quotes Hosea 2:23; verse 26, Hosea 1:10; both from the Septuagint.] God's action in calling people from among both Jews and Gentiles, agrees with what he has already said in the Scripture. When God calls Gentiles, he is doing what he already said he would do.

27. And Isaiah exclaims about Israel. [A paraphrase of *Isa. 10:22-23*.] Paul shows that God had already said that only *part* of Israel would be called. The Jews dare not complain about their dilemma, since it is exactly what the Word of God says. See note on *verse 6*.

28. For the Lord. The meaning is: "God fulfills his promise, but also limits it [to those who have faith]." This is why only part of Israel will be saved. [*Compare note on Rom. 11:26*.]

29. It is as Isaiah had said before. [*Isa. 1:9* Septuagint.] The "descendants" are the same as the "only a few" of *verse 27*. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their sins, and no trace of them was to be found. A few of Israel will be saved. **God Almighty.** ΣΑΒΑΟΤΗ. *Ainsworth* says the Rabbins teach, that when God judges his creation he is called *Elohim*; when he shows mercy he is called *Jehovah*; when he fights against the wicked he is called *Sabaoth*.

Israel and the Gospel

³⁰What shall we say, then? This: that the Gentiles, who were not trying to put themselves right with God, were put right with him through faith; ³¹while the chosen people, who were seeking a law that would put them right with God, did not find it. ³²And why not? Because what they did was not based on faith but on works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone" ³³that the scripture speaks of:

"Look, I place in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall.

But whoever believes in him will not be disappointed."

10 My brothers, how I wish with all my heart that my own people might be saved! How I pray to God for them! ²I can be a witness for them that they are deeply devoted to God. But their devotion is not based on true knowledge.

we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been like Gomorrah."

Israel's Unbelief

What then shall we say? **30** That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but **31** Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because **32** they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is **33** written:

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

10 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on

30-31. What shall we say, then? Up to this point in chapter 9, Paul has looked at the problem of Jewish unbelief, and shown us that no one has any *claim* on God to put him under obligation. Now in these last few verses, he shows it was their own guilt which cut them off from God. **That the Gentiles.** They knew nothing about the Law and its demands. It is a paradox that they did not try to put themselves right with God, yet were put right with him through faith. **But the Jews, chosen people,** who did have the Law, and tried to bring God to themselves with it, failed to do so. The argument between Paul and the Jews is: "being put right with God - what is it, and how can you receive it?"

32. And why not? How do you explain the paradox of Jew and Gentile? Scripture has not failed (*verse 6*), because it predicted all that has happened. **Because what they did.** We immediately think of their relationship to the Law. What they did in obeying the Law, they thought of as placing an obligation on God. We could have the same attitude toward Christianity, with the same results. **They stumbled.** This points directly to Christ! He is the "stumbling stone." The thought of a "crucified Savior" was *offensive* to the Jews (*1 Cor. 1:23*). Unbelief cut them off from God's promise.

33. That the scripture speaks of. Paul blends and paraphrases *Isa. 28:16* and *18:14* as proof that this very thing would happen. **But whoever believes in him.** See *Rom. 5:1*. One who has *peace* will not be *disappointed* at the Judgment.

1. How I wish. His knowledge of the punishment God's wrath will bring on unbelievers causes him deep grief. **How I pray.** Compare *Rom. 9:1-3*.

2. They are deeply devoted to God. This increases the paradox of Jew versus Gentile. **Not based on true knowledge.** Only Truth promises to set you free (*John 8:32*). Devotion not based on Truth becomes *fanaticism* (compare *Acts 17:5; 21:27-31; 22:4*).

³They have not known the way in which God puts men right with himself, and have tried to set up their own way; and so they did not submit themselves to God's way of putting men right. ⁴For Christ has brought the Law to an end, so that everyone who believes is put right with God.

Salvation Is for All

⁵This is what Moses wrote about being put right with God by obeying the Law: "Whoever does what the Law commands will live by it." ⁶But this is what is said about being put right with God through faith: "Do not say to yourself, Who will go up into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down). ⁷"Do not say either, Who will go down into the world below?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸What it says is this: "God's message is near you, on your lips and in your heart"—that is, the message of faith

knowledge. Since they disregarded the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), or 'Who will descend into the deep?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?"

"The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart"; that is, the word of faith we

3. **They have not known.** Compare note on *Rom. 9:32*. Because of their ignorance of Truth, their attitude and their motives were wrong. They tried to *obligate* God to save them. **Their own way.** They were actually guilty of substitution. See notes on *Matt. 7:21-23*; *Mark 7:7-8*. They set up the *merit* of their own experience and actions, and said: "Now, God, you are obligated to save me." **So they did not submit.** This says that they could have done so, but did not. It is a paradox that only as we see we have *no merit*, can we submit to God and live our lives as a *living sacrifice*.

4. **For Christ has brought.** God gave the Law; and it pointed forward to Christ. But Jesus "closed out" the Law, "gave it real meaning," "fulfilled it," "satisfied its righteous demands," and "nailed it to his cross." Yet the Jew chained himself to the Law and would not believe in Christ. **So that everyone who believes.** The moment a man *sees* Christ and understands *what* He is and *what* He has done, he feels that *legal religion* is a thing of the past!!! [But see notes on *law* at the end of *chapter 3*, and the nature of faith, *James 2:19*.]

5. **This is what Moses wrote.** The Law is *self-defeating* as a means of being put right with God, because it demands *perfect obedience* (compare note on *James 2:10*). [The quotation is *Lev. 18:5*.]

6. **But this is what is said.** Paul paraphrases what Moses said in *Deut. 30:11-14*. Being "put right by faith" is God's way. Human religion speaks in terms of what man must accomplish by his own efforts. Christianity is based upon God's act in history through Christ - something that is already an ACCOMPLISHED FACT!!! **Who will go up?** "As is that were necessary to one's believing on him" *MacKnight*.

7. **Who will go down?** "As if the crucifixion of Christ had proved him an impostor" *MacKnight*.

8. **God's message is near you.** "The righteousness appointed by God . . . is easily understood and attained" *MacKnight*. It is not to be *achieved* but *seized!* See *verse 17*.

that we preach. ⁹If you declare with your lips, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰For we believe in our hearts and are put right with God; we declare with our lips and are saved.

¹¹The scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed." ¹²This included everyone, because there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles; God is the same Lord of all, and richly blesses all who call to him. ¹³As the scripture says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴But how can they call to him, if they have not believed? And how can they believe, if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear, if the message is not proclaimed? ¹⁵And how can the message be proclaimed, if the messengers are not sent out? As the scripture says, "How wonderful is the coming of those

are proclaiming: That if you ⁹confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scrip- ¹¹ture says, "He who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, ¹³"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How, then, can they call ¹⁴on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach ¹⁵unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

9. **If you declare.** This shows the content of the message of faith that Paul preached. The duty of faith requires us to declare that Jesus is Lord (compare *Acts 2:36-37*). **And believe in your heart.** Paul here emphasizes faith in the Resurrection! The whole gospel stands or falls on this one fact (compare *1 Cor. 15:17*). See also *1 Pet. 3:21*.

10. **For we believe in our hearts.** Believing and declaring are opposite sides of the same coin. It is true that such a declaration was made at baptism (compare *Acts 8:37*), but it should not be limited to that. See also *Matt. 10:32*.

11. **The scripture says.** [*Isa. 28:16.*] This proves that God's Plan had salvation for both Jew and Gentile. 12-13. **This includes everyone.** [Greek = Gentile.] Paul has shown that no one can be saved by the Law, and that the prophets predicted God would put people right with himself through faith. But the Jew still believed the Good News was only for themselves, not for the Gentiles, and that Paul made himself a traitor by preaching to the Gentiles. **God is the same Lord of all.** Christ is here identified as God, that is, has the same RELIGIOUS VALUE as God (see *Acts 10:36; Phil. 2:10-11*). Salvation depends upon the sinner *invoking* the name of Christ (*Acts 4:12; 22:16*). See also *Matt. 7:21-22* and notes. **As the scripture says.** See note on *Acts 2:21*.

14. **But how can they call to him?** *Verses 14-21* form a continuous section. At least three ideas are involved here: (1) Paul is proving that he did the right thing by preaching the Good News to the Gentiles; (2) the Jews were given every chance to hear, know, and obey; (3) the chain of *invoking, hearing, proclaiming, sending* - the channel through which man is brought to God.

15. **And how can the message be proclaimed?** Compare *Acts 13:1-3*. **As the scripture says.** He quotes *Isa. 52:7* to show the joy in the spread of the gospel. The Jews expected this prophecy to be fulfilled when the Messiah came.

who bring good news!" ¹⁶But they have not all accepted the Good News. Isaiah himself said, "Lord, who believed our message?" ¹⁷So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ.

¹⁸But I ask: Is it true that they did not hear the message? Of course they did—as the scripture says:

"The sound of their voices went out to all the world;
their words reached the ends of the earth."

¹⁹Again I ask: Did the people of Israel not know? Moses himself is the first one to answer:

"I will make you jealous of a people who are not a real nation;
I will make you angry with a nation of foolish people."

²⁰And Isaiah is bolder when he says,

"I was found by those who were not looking for me,
I appeared to those who were not asking for me."

But not all the Israelites ¹⁶ responded to the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes ¹⁷ from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask, did they not hear? ¹⁸ Of course they did?

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."

Again I ask, did Israel not ¹⁹ understand? First, Moses says,

"I will make you envious by means of those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."

Then Isaiah boldly says, ²⁰

"I was found by those who did not seek me;
I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."

16. But they have not all accepted. There never has been a universal belief in the gospel. But notice that "not all" means *some did!* Compare *Acts 21:20*. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that by the end of the first century, more than one-third of the Jewish population did believe in Christ!!!

17. Faith comes from hearing the message. Preaching is the method of Jesus himself (*see Matt. 9:35*). As Paul has shown us, the chain of faith begins by someone being sent to preach the message.

18. But I ask? "They must hear in order to believe; do you mean to say they did not hear?" **Of course they did.** This is so clearly the case that there is a touch of irony in Paul's voice. He quotes *Psalms 19:4* from the Septuagint as proof, and he himself knew just how wide-spread the proclaiming of the Good News had been (*Col. 1:6,23*).

19. Again I ask? Yes, Israel did know what God wanted of her, but as a nation she did not put it into practice. **Moses himself.** He quotes *Deut. 32:20-21*. The point is that if people outside the covenant (who were therefore non-people, not a real nation) could understand the Good News, a gifted people like the Jews had no excuse if they failed to believe it.

20. And Isaiah is bolder. *1 Cor. 6:9-11* shows how far away from God the Gentiles were, when God appeared to them. He sent Paul to them with the Good News of Christ (*Acts 9:15*). God "beat us to the draw!" He acted in history through Jesus Christ before we knew anything about it. But to Peter and the other Jewish Christians, what happened at the house of Cornelius was almost *unthinkable* (*Acts 10:44-45*).

²¹But concerning Israel he says, "I held out my hands the whole day long to a disobedient and rebellious people."

God's Mercy on Israel

11 I ask, then: Did God reject his own people? Certainly not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not rejected his people, whom he chose from the beginning. You know what the scripture says in the passage where Elijah pleads with God against Israel: ³"Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they

But concerning Israel he 21
says, "All day long I have
held out my hands to a
disobedient and obstinate
people."

The Remnant of Israel

11 I ask then, Did God
reject his people? By
no means! I am an Israelite
myself, a descendant of A-
braham, from the tribe of
Benjamin. God did not re- 2
ject his people, whom he
foreknew. Don't you know
what the Scripture says in
the passage about Elijah—
how he appealed to God
against Israel: "Lord, they 3
have killed your prophets,
torn down your altars; I am
the only one left, and they

21. **But concerning Israel he says.** The "hands held out" symbolize that love which pleads with Israel all through its history, and which they constantly despised and turned away from. Their problem was not lack of knowledge or intelligence, but of deliberate rebellion and disobedience. Compare *verse 3*. But the reason they did not know, was that they made themselves *blind* to God's Truth. But has God been "caught with his back turned?" God's plans are never changed, since he knows the *end* from the *beginning!* The questions which may have been in Paul's mind are brought up and answered in *chapter 11*.

1. **Did God reject his own people?** Chapters 9, 10, 11 must be understood in view of the fact that God does call every man (*John 6:44-45*); every man responds to this call in some way (*Matt. 13:18-23*); It is God's desire that everyone come to him and be saved (*2 Pet. 3:9*). The questions which Paul deals with in these chapters was in the mind of every Jew: "If the birth of Christ's CHURCH and the conversion of the Gentiles fulfilled God's Plan to bless and save men, then did not God reverse himself, break his promise to Israel, and reject his own chosen people?" **Certainly not!** [*God forbid* is not in the Greek.] God does not reverse himself and change his mind and Plan! In *verses 1-10* Paul examines the question of whether Israel's unbelief involves God's rejection of his chosen people. *Verses 11-24* examines the result of some Jews being excluded from the Messianic Kingdom/Church. *Verses 25-36* praise God's love, wisdom, and faithfulness, as it is revealed in the ONE PLAN OF SALVATION for both Jew and Gentile. **I myself am an Israelite.** *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says this should be taken as meaning: "I, too, am an Israelite, to whom the very idea of God's rejection of His people is an impious and incredible idea, to be repelled with horror."

2. **God has not rejected his people.** Paul formally states that God has not rejected his nation of Israel in the fact of choosing the Gentiles. **Where Elijah pleads with God against Israel.** "Whoever says God has rejected his people Israel, must be ignorant of what the scripture says." Paul quotes *1 Kings 19:10* as proof of his claim. The quotation shows Elijah impeaching Israel as a nation.

3. **I am the only one left.** Paul, like Elijah, was lonely and persecuted, and Israel as a nation seemed to have abandoned God or been abandoned by Him. But Paul better understands God's way (and His faithfulness).

are trying to kill me." "What answer did God give him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not worshiped the false god Baal."

"It is the same way now at this time: there is a small number of those whom God has chosen, because of his mercy. "His choice is based on his mercy, not on what they have done. For if God's choice were based on what men do, then his mercy would not be true mercy.

"What then? The people of Israel did not find what they were looking for. It was the small group that God chose who found it; the rest grew deaf to God's call. "As the scripture says, "God made them dull of heart and mind; to this very day they cannot see with their eyes or hear

are trying to kill me"? And 4
what was God's answer to
him? "I have reserved for
myself seven thousand who
have not bowed the knee to
Baal." So too, at the present
time there is a remnant
chosen by grace. And if by
grace, then it is no longer by
works; if it were, grace
would no longer be grace.

What then? What Israel 7
sought so earnestly it did not
obtain, but the elect did.
The others became harden-
ed, as it is written: 8

"God gave them a spirit
of stupor,
eyes so that they could
not see,
and ears so that they
could not hear,
to this very day."

4. **What answer did God give him?** This quotes *1 Kings 19:18* as the answer. **Seven thousand men.** *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "God has reserved the seven thousand; He has reserved them for Himself; it is on this the proof depends that He has not cast off His people. The seven thousand are Israel to Him." Women and children were not mentioned, only men, yet there were surely many of them as well who followed God. [Baal was the sun-god worshiped by the ancient people of Canaan. Compare *1 Kings 16:31-33; 18:28.*]

5. **It is the same way now.** God's answer in *verse 4*. **At this time.** In the Greek, this points to the present time (as Paul writes) as a CLIMAX. The idea is the same as *Romans 9:6-13*. **Because of his mercy.** The emphasis is on this fact. But note that God's faithfulness in keeping his people is not based on an unconditional arbitrary decree. The "seven thousand" had not worshiped the false god Baal. The "small number" whom God has chosen have faith in Christ! These Jewish Christians form an integral part of the church of Christ. We should also notice that the Devil is limited in what he can do. See *Job 1:6-12; Luke 10:18; 1 John 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:13.*

6. **His choice is based on his mercy.** Paul again emphasizes that nothing a man can do will give him the right to place an obligation on God. God did not accept this "small number" because they obeyed the Law, but because they accepted his offer of mercy! *Salvation is not achieved but seized! For if God's choice.* Mercy is *undeserved!* If God saved on the basis of law, it would be deserved, and could not be on the basis of mercy.

7. **What then?** "How will we describe the present situation, if not in the painful language of *verse 1?*" **It was the small group.** See *verse 5*. **The rest grew deaf to God's call.** [EPOROSETHAN is 3 pers. pl. aor. 1, ind. passive.] Compare *2 Cor. 3:14*. Paul is purposely vague about how they grew deaf to God.

8. **As the scripture says.** The quotation is a paraphrase of *Deut. 29:4; Isa. 29:10; 6:9-10*. **God made them dull.** It is God who sends this *spirit* of dullness - not arbitrarily or at random, but as a JUDGMENT. When God cannot convince, he confuses! Compare *Isa. 29:13; Psalm 95:7-8; 2 Thess. 2:11-12*. **To this very day.** *2 Cor. 3:14-15.*

with their ears." ⁹And David says,
 "May they be caught and trapped at
 their feasts;
 may they fall, may they be punished!
¹⁰May their eyes be closed so that they
 cannot see;
 and make them bend under their
 troubles at all times."

¹¹I ask, then: When the Jews stumbled, did they fall to their ruin? By no means! Because they sinned, salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make the Jews jealous of them. ¹²The sin of the Jews brought rich blessings to the world, and their spiritual poverty brought rich blessings to the Gentiles. How much greater the blessings will be, then, when the complete number of Jews is included!

And David says: 9
 "May their table become
 a snare and a trap,
 a stumbling block and a
 retribution for them.
 "May their eyes be dark-
 ened so that they can-
 not see,
 and their backs be bent
 forever."

Ingrafted Branches

Again I ask, Did they
 stumble so as to fall beyond
 recovery? Not at all! Rather,
 because of their transgres-
 sion, salvation has come to
 the Gentiles to make Israel
 envious. But if their trans-
 gression means riches for
 the world, and their loss
 means riches for the Gen-
 tiles, how much greater
 riches will their fullness
 bring! 11

9-10. **And David says.** The quotation is *Psalm 69:22-23* in the Septuagint. This does not mean the Jews are more sinful than the Gentiles. The Jew loved the Law of God, but the Law misunderstood, destroyed him. See also what Peter said in *Acts 15:10*. "This veil is removed only when a man is joined to Christ" (*2 Cor. 3:15; compare Matt. 23:39*).

11. **Did they fall to their ruin?** "Have they been irrevocably doomed to hell, with no chance at all for salvation?" **By no means!** [*God forbid* is not in the Greek.] God has no desire to see anyone be lost eternally (*Matt. 18:14*). **Because they sinned.** God did not decree that they should sin, but he used their sin to bless the Gentiles. Compare *Acts 13:46-48; 18:6; 28:25-28*. *Lipscomb* says: "Much of the dealing of God with the Jews and much of the teaching of the prophets was intended to affect the Gentiles fully as much as the Jews. Pharaoh was raised up that God might show to the Egyptians and other nations the power of God. David, the shepherd lad, slew Goliath, a skilled giant, "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." (*1 Sam. 17:46*)" **To make the Jews jealous.** As God used the sin of the Jews to bless the Gentiles, he would use the faith of the Gentiles to bless the Jews. Compare *Deut. 32:21*.

12. **Brought rich blessings.** The Jews scattered throughout the world among the Gentiles were a big help in spreading the Good News of Christ (compare *Acts 2:5*). But this *scattering* was the result of their own rebellion (compare *2 Macc. 1:27*). God made use of the unbelief (and rejection) of the Jewish Nation to complete his Plan for blessing the Gentiles and the Jews. **When the complete number of Jews is included!** [PLEROMA = completeness.] The blessing for both Jew and Gentile comes through participating in the Good News of Christ (the gospel). The *small number* (verse 5) were a priceless blessing to the spread of Christianity. *MacKnight*; "How much more will their filling the church be followed with great advantages to the Gentiles?"

The Salvation of the Gentiles

¹³I am speaking now to you Gentiles: as long as I am an apostle to the Gentiles I will take pride in my work. ¹⁴Perhaps I can make the people of my own race jealous, and so be able to save some of them. ¹⁵For when they were rejected, the world was made friends with God. What will it be, then, when they are accepted? It will be life for the dead!

¹⁶If the first piece of bread is given to God, then the whole loaf is his also; and if the roots of a tree are offered to God, the branches are his

I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be, but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. 13 14 15 16

13. **I am speaking now.** The church at Rome was made up of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. It is important for Gentile Christians to have the right attitude toward Jewish Christians, since they are ONE in Christ (*Gal. 3:28*)! **An apostle to the Gentiles.** "As *apostleship* to the Gentiles is represented by me, I take pride in my work (by working hard at it), hoping to save some of my own people by making them jealous."

14. **And so be able to save some of them.** Paul was willing to use every resource and even be sacrificed as a martyr, to turn his people to Christ! Each Jew who is saved, goes to make up the *complete number* of *verse 12*.

15. **For when they were rejected.** This returns to the reasoning of *verse 12*. See notes on *verse 11*. The unbelieving Jews have become "undigested Jonahs," running from God. **It will be life for the dead!** *Jowett* says: "Words fall him and he employs the strongest he can find, thinking rather of their general force than of their precise signification." The meaning is: a *blessing beyond human imagination*. Compare *1 Cor. 2:9*; *1 Pet. 4:6*.

16. **If the first piece of bread.** The symbolism is taken from *Num. 15:17-21*. A portion of the grain-harvest was baked into two loaves (*Lev. 23:17*) which were presented to God as a sacrifice. This "first-portion" or *first piece* made the whole loaf holy, including the produce of the entire land. Two thoughts are presented by this symbolism. (1) *MacKnight* says: "By this similitude [symbolism] the apostle teaches, that as the first converts from among the Jews were most acceptable to God, and became members of his newly-erected visible church, so, when the whole mass or body of the nation is converted, they, in like manner, will be most acceptable to God, and will become members of his visible church. Other holiness is not competent to a whole nation." (2) The "first piece of bread" is Abraham himself, and the whole loaf is "God's Chosen People." This seems to best fit in with Paul's line of reasoning here. See also *Gal. 3:17-18, 29*. *Verse 16* is also further proof of Paul's claim in *verses 1-2*. *National Israel* and *God's Chosen People* are not identically the same; and in rejecting most of *National Israel*, God has not rejected his Chosen People. **If the roots.** The root is Abraham, and the branches are God's Chosen People. The symbolism is taken from *Jer. 11:16-17*.

also. ¹⁷Some of the branches of the cultivated olive tree have been broken off, and the branch of a wild olive tree has been joined to it. You Gentiles are like that wild olive tree, and now you share the strength and rich life of the Jews. ¹⁸So then, you must not despise those who were broken off like branches. How can you be proud? You are just a branch; you don't support the root—the root supports you.

¹⁹But you will say, "Yes, but the branches were broken off to make room for me." ²⁰This is true. They were broken off because they did not believe, while you remain in place because you believe. But do not have proud thoughts about it; instead, be afraid. ²¹God did not spare the Jews, who are like natural branches; do you think he

If some of the branches ¹⁷ have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not ¹⁸ boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You ¹⁹ will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Grant- ²⁰ ed. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For ²¹ if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

17. Some of the branches. In the next seven verses, Paul answers an objection which a Gentile Christian might have to his use of the "root and branches" symbolism. The olive tree, of which Abraham is the root, is the *chosen family of Abraham* - not his descendants in a natural way (of the flesh), but his descendants in a spiritual way (through faith) who are "children of the promise." Paul draws two special lessons from this: (1) humility, for the Gentiles; (2) hope, for Israel. **Have been broken off.** Note: not *all*, but *some*. **And the branch of a wild olive tree.** It is very important to notice that the whole cultivated olive tree is *not cut down!* Only *some branches* were broken off because of unbelief (*verse 20*). The wild olive has been joined to the tree *among*, not *instead of*, the natural branches which remain. It was the *small group* of Jewish Christians (*verses 5 & 7*) who took the Good News of Christ to the Gentiles!!!

18. You must not despise. Paul tells the Gentile Christians that they must not despise those Jews who do not believe in Christ (those who were broken off). A farmer grafts cultivated branches on wild stock; the grafting in of the Gentiles is contrary to nature (but no less real). But it is the Gentile who shares the strength and rich life of the Jews, not the other way around.

19. Yes, but. "I know I am not the root, but the branches were broken off to make room for me. Doesn't this make me superior to them?"

20. This is true. This means: "There is some truth in this line of reasoning." But these branches were not just broken off to make room for the Gentiles. **Because they did not believe.** What Paul is saying here, helps to explain what he said in *Rom. 9:14-18*. It was their own unbelief which caused them to be broken off. **Because you believe.** It is faith which joins the Gentile to the tree. **Instead, be afraid.** This is contrasted with "being proud of yourself." A religion based on faith (*Rom. 3:27*) does not permit boasting and being proud. See also *Eph. 2:8-10*. Unbelief would also break them off!

21. God did not spare the Jews. If God broke off the natural branches because of their disbelief, he will break off the Gentile branches who cease to believe.

will spare you? ²²Here we see how kind and how severe God is. He is severe toward those who have fallen, but kind to you—if you continue in his kindness; but if you do not, you too will be broken off. ²³And the Jews, if they abandon their unbelief, will be put back in the place where they were, because God is able to put them back again. ²⁴You Gentiles are like the branch of a wild olive tree that is broken off, and then, contrary to nature, is joined to the cultivated olive tree. The Jews are like this cultivated tree; and it will be much easier, then, for God to join these broken-off branches back to their own tree.

God's Mercy on All

²⁵There is a secret truth, my brothers, which I want you to know. It will keep you from thinking how wise you are. It is this: the stubbornness of the people of Israel is not permanent, but will last only until the complete number of Gentiles

Consider therefore the ²² kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And ²³ if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if ²⁴ you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

All Israel Will Be Saved

I do not want you to be ²⁵ ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

22. How kind and how severe God is. To those Jews who have fallen, Christ said: "the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you" (*Matt. 21:43*). Some twelve years after Paul wrote these words, the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem and 1,100,000 Jews (who had fallen) DESTROYED THEMSELVES (see note on *Matt. 24:21*). But kind to you. God offered the Gentiles a chance to be part of the tree.

23. And the Jews. They can be part of the tree also. See note on *verse 11*. The curse of *dullness* in *verses 7-10* is not absolute, then, but vanishes when the Jew believes in Christ (*2 Cor. 3:14*). This proves the Jew has *free will* in this matter. (As this is being written, many Jewish young people are converting to Christ.) [Some see in this a promise that Israel as a nation will declare their faith in Christ, at some future time.]

24. You Gentiles. If God saves the Gentile, this is proof he will also save the Jew! If the Gentile can be joined to the tree of Abraham by faith, how much easier will it be to re-join the Jew who believes in Christ.

25. There is a secret truth. [MUSTERION = something hidden, which has now been revealed. Compare *1 Cor. 2:7-10*] Otis Gatewood writes: "*Romans 11:25* does not say that by a special act of God the Jews are blinded until the end of time and the Gentiles come to fully control the political kingdoms of the world. This is exactly what a large host of Gentile preachers teach. They are the ones who are blinded - not the Jews." Gatewood also says: "Faith comes by hearing the Word of the Lord (*Rom. 10:17*), so when the Word of the Lord was preached, the Jew's partial blindness was removed and the "fullness of the Gentiles" came in and they were accepted by the Jews on an equal footing with them. This is explained by the Apostle Paul when he said: 'As a result, there are no Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, or free men, but Christ is all, Christ is in all' (*Col. 3:11*)."
Compare *Eph. 2:14-18; 3:4-6; Luke 21:24; Matt. 24:14* and notes on each *verse*. The unbelieving Jews, as a source of persecution, ceased to be a factor after Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.

comes to God. ²⁶And this is how all Israel will be saved. As the scripture says,

“The Savior will come from Zion,
and remove all wickedness from the descendants of Jacob.

²⁷I will make this covenant with them,
when I take away their sins.”

²⁸Because they reject the Good News, the Jews are God’s enemies for the sake of you, the Gentiles. But because of God’s choice, they are his friends for the sake of the patriarchs. ²⁹For God does not change his mind about whom he chooses and blesses. ³⁰As for you Gentiles, you disobeyed God in the past; but now you have received God’s mercy because the Jews disobeyed. ³¹In the same way, because of the mercy that you have received, the Jews now disobey God, in order that they also may now receive God’s mercy. ³²For God has made all men prisoners of disobedience, that he might show mercy to them all.

And so all Israel will be 26
saved, as it is written:

“The deliverer will come
from Zion;
he will turn godlessness
away from Jacob.
And this is my covenant 27
with them
when I take away their
sins.”

As far as the gospel is con- 28
cerned, they are enemies on
your account; but as far as
election is concerned, they
are loved on account of the
patriarchs, for God’s gifts 29
and his call are irrevocable.
Just as you who were at one 30
time disobedient to God
have not received mercy as a
result of their disobedience,
so they too, as a result of 31
God’s mercy to you, have
now become disobedient in
order that they too may now
receive mercy. For God has 32
bound all men over to diso-
bedience so that he may
have mercy on them all.

26. **And this is how.** [ΝΟΥΤΟΣ = in this way, like this, this is how.] Paul paraphrases *Isa. 59:20* which is a prophecy fulfilled by the *first coming* of Christ! It is not the “end time” which Paul looks at, but the events before the Days of Punishment (*Luke 21:20*). The gospel was preached to all the world (*Col. 1:23*), and percentage-wise, the *complete number* of Gentiles did come to God. *Josephus*, the Jewish historian, says that by the end of the first century, more than *one-third* of the Jews had become Christians! Christ did come from Zion, he did remove all wickedness (by his imputed righteousness), he did make a new covenant (*Heb. 8:7-13*), and every Jew can share in it (*verse 23*).

27. **When I take away their sins.** The central truth here is that the *sins of Jacob* will be forgiven according to Jehovah’s COVENANT - not the one at Sinai, but the promise to Abraham (*Gal. 3:17-18*).

28. **The Jews are God’s enemies.** Compare *verse 11*. **But because of God’s choice.** *MacKnight* says: “The very persons here said to be beloved [friends] in respect of the election [God’s choice], are in the preceding clause said to be enemies in respect of the gospel. Wherefore, this election cannot be of individuals to eternal life: but it is that national election, whereby the Jews were made the church and people of God. See *Rom. 9:11* note.”

29. **For God does not change his mind.** See *Gal. 3:14-18*.

30. **As for you Gentiles.** The church at Rome was mostly made up of Gentiles. **You disobeyed God in the past.** See *1 Cor. 6:9-11*. **Because the Jews disobeyed.** It is an important fact of Paul’s theology that God’s choosing of the Jews will never be revoked - that is, that the “door of mercy” will always be open for them (*verse 23*). The Gentiles *must not* think the Jews are under God’s special curse, and to prevent this, Paul shows that the disobedience of the Jews brought the *chance to be saved* to the Gentiles.

31. **In order that they also.** Some Jews disobeyed God because they saw the Gentiles coming to Christ. Paul’s point is that both Gentile and Jew will receive God’s mercy in Christ. Compare *Rom. 3:21-24*.

32. **For God.** “God has placed all men under the sentence of death for their disobedience, in order, that by admitting them into his covenant and church, he might make them aware that he gives a free gift to all.”

Praise to God

³³How great are God's riches! How deep are his wisdom and knowledge! Who can explain his decisions? Who can understand his ways? ³⁴As the scripture says,

"Who knows the mind of the Lord?
Who is able to give him advice?"

³⁵Who has ever given him anything,
so that he had to pay it back?"

³⁶For all things were created by him, and all things exist through him and for him. To God be the glory forever! Amen.

Life in God's Service

12 So then, my brothers, because of God's great mercy to us, I make this appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. ²Do not conform outwardly to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a

Doxology

O the depth of the riches, 33
the wisdom and the
knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his
judgments, and his
paths beyond tracing
out!

"Who has known the 34
mind of the Lord? Or
who has been his
adviser?"

"Who has ever given to 35
God, that God should
repay him?"

For from him and through 36
him and to him are all
things.

To him be the glory for-
ever! Amen.

Living Sacrifices

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your selves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any 2
longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed

33-36. **How great are God's riches!** In response to *verse 32*, Paul gives a doxology of praise to God! The whole world, with its racism, violence, lust, and unbelief, may seem to be "disorganized confusion!" But when we see it as Paul sees it, God's Purpose is over all and through all! No one can obligate God by giving anything to him! Man completely depends upon God's mercy! God has acted in Christ to set men free, and salvation is a free gift to be seized! [*Verse 34* quotes *Isa. 40:13* Septuagint; *verse 35* paraphrases *Job 41:11* Septuagint.]

1. So then, my brothers. In the first eleven chapters, Paul showed us man's guilt and God's offer of salvation. Now he shows us the obligation which God places on those who reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make themselves part of it. See notes on *law* at the end of *chapter 3*. **Offer yourselves.** You offer yourself! This is your choice of free will. Every Christian is a priest to God (*Rev. 1:6*). **A living sacrifice.** This directly contrasts with the sacrifices of the Law (*Heb. 9:11-14*). We offer no dead animals on Jewish altars. After we have been made clean by the bloody-death of Christ, we give ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. **This is the true worship.** The *living sacrifice* is not a *sin-offering* to put us right with God. Rather, it is a *praise-offering*, and our good works are true worship to God. We do not mistreat and mutilate our bodies as some Gentiles do in honor to their "god," but we use our total being to live *Christ's life!* Compare *Matt. 25:31-40*.

2. Do not conform outwardly. This is an evil age/world (*Gal. 1:4*) and Satan is the evil god of this world (*2 Cor. 4:4*). The exact opposite of "offering yourselves as a living sacrifice," is to *let the world squeeze you into its mold. But let God transform you.* This is written to Christians who are already new in Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5*). After being put right with God, the new Christian is still by nature a part of this world (*Eph. 2:1-10*). The Christian is continually faced with the choice of living *Christ's*

complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good, and is pleasing to him, and is perfect.

³And because of God's gracious gift to me, I say to all of you: Do not think of yourselves more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking, and each one of you judge himself according to the amount of faith that God has given him. ⁴We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. ⁵In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. ⁶So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we must do it according to the faith that we have. ⁷If it is to serve, we must serve. If it is to teach, we

by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let

life in this world (*Rom. 5:3-4*). By a complete change of your mind. See *Phil. 2:5*; *1 Pet. 1:16*. "Do not restrain the Holy Spirit" (*1 Thess 5:19*) implies that it is possible to do so. Then you will be able to know. Only one who has been united to Christ can know this (*1 Cor 2:14*), but it is a learning process as well (*Rom. 2:18*).

3. And because of God's gracious gift to me. His authority as an apostle. Do not think of yourselves more highly. Spiritual gifts were likely as much of a problem (or would be a problem) as at Corinth. Rank has no place in the messianic community (compare *John 13:1-17*). Everything you have has been given to you (*1 Cor. 4:7*). Each of us is only doing our job, nothing more (*1 Cor. 3:5*). To the amount of faith. In one sense, faith is a gift from God (*James 2:19*; *Acts 11:18*), but here it means supernatural faith (gifts) from the Spirit. We are to think of our talents as gifts from God as well.

4. We have many parts. Our human bodies are made up of many different parts, each fulfilling its separate function for the good of the whole.

5. In the same way. Christians form one body or messianic community under the rule of Christ who is the head. We are all joined to each other. Just as the parts of our natural body are joined together. Each Christian is "Spirit-filled" (*Acts 5:32*), and the Spirit welds us together into one body (*1 Cor. 12:12-13*), but individual Christians are not the whole body by themselves (*1 Cor. 12:17*).

6. So we are to use our different gifts. Each one in the messianic community has his duties, just as the hand or foot or eye of the body. Compare *1 Cor. 12:4-7*. In accordance with the grace. Compare *verse 3*. Seven gifts are now mentioned. The first four are "official," and some are supernatural. To speak God's message. Since the New Testament was not yet written down, some were given the supernatural ability to speak God's message by inspiration. [These were called prophets. They were sometimes, but not always, comparable to preachers.]

7. Or if it is to serve. *Acts 6:2-3*. If it is to teach. A church leader/elder was supposed to be a teacher.

must teach. ⁸If it is to encourage others, we must do so. Whoever shares with others what he has, must do it generously; whoever has authority, must work hard; whoever shows kindness to others, must do it cheerfully.

⁹Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another warmly as brothers in Christ, and be eager to show respect for one another. ¹¹Work hard, and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. ¹²Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times. ¹³Share your belongings with your needy brothers, and open your homes to strangers.

¹⁴Ask God to bless those who persecute you; yes, ask him to bless, not to curse. ¹⁵Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Have the same concern for all alike. Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. Do not think of yourselves as wise.

him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently, if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. 8

Love

Love must be sincere. 9
Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 12

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Don't be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Don't be conceited. 15

8. If it is to encourage others. Acts 4:36; 9:26-27. Whoever shares. 2 Cor. 9:11-13. Authority. 1 Pet. 5:1-4. Kindness. 2 Cor. 9:7; Gal. 6:1-2.

9. Love must be completely sincere. Compare 1 Cor. 13. Hate what is evil. A Christian cannot love evil and love God at the same time. Hold on to what is good. We are to seize good and make ourselves part of it.

10. Love one another. Being "one in Christ" is not make-believe! A real love and kindness welds us together and makes us honor each other. John 13:35.

11. Work hard. A Christian may "burn out," but never "rust out!" Serve the Lord. The "spiritual temperature" is to be high in the messianic community!!!

12. Let your hope keep you joyful. The evidence of the Holy Spirit living in the Christian is: faith, hope, and love. From heaven's view, they are the supreme miracles of divine grace. Be patient in your troubles. Rom. 5:3-5. Pray at all times. Luke 18:1. We see this in the life of Jesus.

13. Share your belongings. Gal. 6:10; Acts 2:44-45; 6:1-7. Open your homes to strangers. The things in this verse were especially important in the first century, when persecution often forced Christians to "run for their lives." Christianity is a faith with an open hand, an open heart, and an open door! See 1 John 3:17.

14. Ask God to bless. If you can do this, you are a transformed person! See note on Matt. 5:44. Christ did this as he hung on the cross!!!

15. Be happy. A Christian will share the joys and sorrows of others, especially other Christians.

16. Have the same concern for all alike. Treat your fellow Christian as you would want him to treat you. Compare James 2:1-4. Do not be proud. "Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty." Jesus made himself the servant of others. Do not think of yourselves as wise. Compare Luke 18:9-14.

¹⁷If someone does evil to you, do not pay him back with evil. Try to do what all men consider to be good. ¹⁸Do everything possible, on your part, to live at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's wrath do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." ²⁰Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the sight of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge, I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Duties toward the State Authorities

13 Everyone must obey the state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have

Submission to the Authorities

13 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by

17. **Do not pay him back with evil.** Our human nature wants revenge! It may be hard to return good for evil, *but it is required*, and the rewards are great. See *John 13:35* and note. **Try to do.** See *Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12*.

18. **Do everything possible.** Sometimes it is impossible, but it must never be the Christian who is at fault. Compare *Matt. 5:9*.

19. **Never take revenge.** If someone does you wrong, *you harm yourself* by taking revenge. Some condition in the church at Rome must have been the reason for this strong statement from Paul. Not the one who thinks he has been wronged, but rather God, is the moral judge of all. Paul quotes *Deut. 32:35* to prove this. Compare *1 Thess. 2:16*.

20. **Instead, as the scripture says.** Paul quotes *Prov. 25:21-22* Septuagint. Compare *2 Kings 6:22; Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27-28*. A Christian is not passively non-resistive, but *actively repays* hostility with love!!! The purpose of Christ is not to destroy, but to save!!! This must be our purpose as well.

21. **Do not let evil defeat you.** If the Christian takes revenge and returns evil for evil, he has been defeated. This is Paul's point here. **Conquer evil with good.** This is the only answer. Good is stronger than evil, even though this may not seem true at the time. Taking revenge does not change your enemy, but kindness can make him your friend. This is God's way.

1. **Everyone must obey the state authorities.** Paul is telling Christians to obey the Roman government that would soon be persecuting them. This is a paradox. The Christian is to obey whatever government rules the country where he lives. The Gentile Christians would be expected to pick up many Jewish ideas from the Jewish Christians. The Jews believed no Gentile had the right to rule over them, basing this on *Deut. 17:15*. As believers in the Messiah, "another king, by the name of Jesus" (*Acts 17:7*), even Gentile Christians might feel they had no loyalty to any human government. Paul's teaching here is the same as what Jesus said in *Mark 12:14-17*. The point is that human governments are necessary to preserve moral order. All human governments have been put there by God. [The Book of Revelation shows us that EVERY government serves both God and Satan at exactly the same time.]

been put there by God. ²Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself. ³For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of the man in authority? Then do what is good, and he will praise you. ⁴For he is God's servant working for your own good. But if you do evil, be afraid of him, because his power to punish is real. He is God's servant and carries out God's wrath on those who do evil. ⁵For this reason you must obey the authorities—not just because of God's wrath, but also as a matter of conscience.

⁶This is also the reason that you pay taxes, because the authorities are working for God when they fulfill their duties. ⁷Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honor for them all.

God. Consequently, he who ² rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for ³ those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is ⁴ God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of justice to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. ⁵

This is also why you pay ⁶ taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe ⁷ him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

2. Whoever opposes. This is a strong statement! We must obey the civil laws just as we must obey God's laws. Of course, this does not mean we are to obey wicked rulers when they order us to disobey God (*compare Acts 4:19*).

3. By those who do good. In general, rulers work for the good of their people [to stay in power], which includes punishing those who do evil. Some rulers are an exception to this, and probably all rulers are at sometime an exception.

4. For he is God's servant. The ruler is to guard order and preserve peace. In this he is God's servant. **But if you do evil.** In just a few years, Jewish armed terrorists rebelled against the Roman government, and it all ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

5. But also as a matter of conscience. There are two reasons we should obey civil government: (1) to avoid God's wrath (*verse 4*); (2) because of conscience (it is God's will that we obey).

6. That you pay taxes. Since the civil ruler is God's servant, Christians are obligated to pay taxes to him. See *Matt. 22:21*.

7. Pay, then, what you owe them. Pay to them whatever they have a right to claim from you. **And show respect and honor.** [Fear = respect, reverence.] The Christian respects and honors those whose right it is to be respected and honored, and pays his just taxes. He cannot do less, and be true to God.

Duties toward One Another

⁸Be in debt to no one—the only debt you should have is to love one another. Whoever loves his fellow-man has obeyed the Law. ⁹The commandments, “Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not covet”—all these, and any others besides, are summed up in the one command, “Love your fellow-man as yourself.” ¹⁰Whoever loves his fellow-man will never do him wrong. To love, then, is to obey the whole Law.

¹¹You must do this, because you know what hour it is: the time has come for you to wake up from your sleep. For the moment when we will be saved is closer now than it was when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over, day is almost here. Let us stop doing the things that belong to the dark, and take up the weapons for fighting in

Love, for the Day Is Near

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule? “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of

8. **Be in debt to no one.** Some think this means a Christian should not use credit or borrow money. But most see it continuing the thought of *verse 7*, and understand it to mean: “Pay every just claim, not only to government, but to everyone. The debt of love, though fully paid, is still always owed!” **Has obeyed the Law.** “Has obeyed” implies that obedience is already completed in the simple act of love.

9. **Are summed up in the one command.** Law describes moral standards. The law of Christ is a rule of life for believers. Paul names four commandments which have to do with human relationships. These and any others are summed up in LOVE. [“Do not give false testimony” is omitted in most of the manuscripts.]

10. **To love, then, is to obey the whole Law.** Compare *Gal. 5:13-15. The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: “It is apparent once more that NOMOS is the Mosaic Law, and not law in general . . .”

11. **You must do this.** “Love your fellow-man as yourself.” **You know what hour it is.** They lived at a crucial point in history! See notes on *Matt. 24:29-31; Rom. 11:25-26.* **For you to wake up.** Christians must have a sense of *urgency*, like the farmer who *races* to finish his work before sundown!!! **When we will be saved.** Even though Paul knew (by inspiration) that the Lord would not come in his lifetime (*2 Thess. 2:3*), yet he always had a strong sense of the nearness of that Day when Christ would Come! **Saved here** is used in the sense of our being *set completely free* - body, soul, spirit - in Eternity. Compare *1 John 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; Rom. 8:23.*

12. **The night is nearly over.** The “night” of spiritual darkness [ignorance and evil]. **Day is almost here.** When the Truth of Christ sets people free from sin and death. [Johnson sees this night as the period leading up to the “will be saved” of *verse 11.* But *verse 13* points this symbolism to the present time.] **Things that belong to the dark.** Sin, evil, and everything that cannot *survive* the light of Truth. **Take up the weapons.** These *weapons of light* are the exact opposite of the “things that belong to the dark.” See *Rom. 6:13; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Thess. 5:8.*

the light. ¹³Let us conduct ourselves properly, as people who live in the light of day; no orgies or drunkenness, no immorality or indecency, no fighting or jealousy. ¹⁴But take up the weapons of the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop giving attention to your sinful nature, to satisfy its desires.

light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of your sinful nature.

Do Not Judge Your Brother

14 Accept among you the man who is weak in the faith, but do not argue with him about his personal opinions. ²One man's faith allows him to eat anything, but the man who is weak in the faith eats only vegetables. ³The man who will eat anything is not to despise the man who doesn't; while the one who eats only vegetables is not to pass judgment on the one who eats

The Weak and The Strong

14 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted

13. **Let us conduct ourselves properly.** Christians are "walking advertisements" for the Faith. **Orgies.** See note on *Rev. 2:20*. **Immorality.** The technical word is *fornication*. See notes on *Matt. 19:9*; *Heb. 13:4*. **Indecency.** Sensuality, things that degrade human character. **Fighting.** See *James 4:1-5*. **Jealousy.** See *Gal. 5:19-21*; *1 Cor. 3:3*.

14. **But take up the weapons.** Compare note on *verse 12*. We make ourselves part of Christ in baptism (*Gal. 3:27*). Here the thought is that we ourselves are to take the weapons (principles?) of Christ and make them part of our fighting-gear. The new birth (*John 3:5*) is only the beginning of our new life in Christ, and we learn and apply the teaching of Christ to the totality of all we do. This means we can no longer be a slave to our sinful nature.

1. **Accept among you.** Take into your circle of fellowship. **Who is weak in the faith.** The messianic community contains those who are "spiritual babies" as well as "spiritual adults." It takes time to *get over* the doubts and scruples of the past. Compare notes on *Col. 2:20-23*; *1 Cor. 8:7-12*. **But do not argue with him.** "Accept the *spiritual baby* in kindness and hospitality and let him share in the life of the church. But don't argue about his personal opinions and don't give him a place of authority until he has matured (*Heb. 5:12*)." Arguing personal opinions does not create love nor build the church. Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5*.

2. **To eat anything.** Food was a "live issue" at Rome. One man understands he is free in Christ, and ignores all dietary restrictions (except those of *Acts 15:20*). See what Paul says in *Col. 2:16*. **Eats only vegetables.** This man was "weak in the faith," and ate no meat because of religious scruples.

3. **Is not to despise.** The one who is fully aware of his freedom in Christ is not to feel contempt for the ignorance and immaturity of his brother in Christ. **Is not to pass judgment.** The man whose religious opinions force him to be a vegetarian is not to accuse his more mature brother of sinning because he eats everything.

anything, because God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge the servant of someone else? It is his own Master who will decide whether he succeeds or fails. And he will succeed, because the Lord is able to make him succeed.

⁵One man thinks that a certain day is more important than the others, while another man thinks that all days are the same. Each one should have his own mind firmly made up. ⁶Whoever thinks highly of a certain day does it in honor of the Lord; whoever eats anything does it in honor of the Lord, because he gives thanks to God for the food. Whoever refuses to eat certain things does so in honor of the Lord, and he gives thanks to God. ⁷None of us lives for himself only, none of us dies for himself only; ⁸if we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. Whether we live or die, then, we belong to the Lord. ⁹For Christ died and rose to life in order to be the

him. Who are you to judge ⁴
someone else's servant? To
his own master he stands or
falls. And he will stand, for
the Lord is able to make him
stand.

One man considers one ⁵
day more sacred than an-
other; another man con-
siders every day alike. Each
one should be fully con-
vinced in his own mind. He ⁶
who regards one day as
special, does so to the Lord.
He who eats meat, eats to
the Lord, for he gives thanks
to God; and he who ab-
stains, does so to the Lord,
and gives thanks to God. ⁷
For none of us lives to him-
self alone and none of us
dies to himself alone. If we ⁸
live, we live to the Lord; and
if we die, we die to the Lord.
So, whether we live or die,
we belong to the Lord.

For this very reason, ⁹
Christ died and returned to
life so that he might be the
Lord of both the dead and

4. Who are you? "You are not his master, and you have no authority over him." **And he will succeed.** While very aware of the dangers, Paul still sees Christian freedom as a moral victory. [The Pharisees are an example which shows it is very easy to be too conservative and reactionary.]

5. That a certain day. Both Jews and Gentiles found it difficult to give up traditions and superstitions. Compare *Acts 21:20*; *Col. 2:16*; *Gal. 4:10*. [We honor Sunday as the Lord's Day, because He raised from death on that day. Yet Sunday is not the "Christian Sabbath." Christians have no Sabbath Day on this earth. It comes in Eternity (*Psalms 23:6*; *Heb. 4:8-10*).] **Should have his own mind.** Each one should act as he thinks right. Compare *verse 23*. If he wants to honor a certain day, let him do as his conscience requires. There is no intrinsic value to the day itself, only the honor which the Christian gives it.

6. Whoever. In each case, the Christian is *doing or not doing* because of his love and respect for God. Compare *1 Cor. 6:12*; *8:8*.

7. For himself only. Christians belong to God (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*). Whether in life or in death, we are his. [Some also see in this the thought that what we do affects others.]

8. We belong to the Lord. The totality of our earthly existence, our life and even our death, is a service for our God. See notes on *Rom. 12:1*.

9. In order to be the Lord. This points back to God's act in Christ to set men free. In dying and rising to life, Christ became Lord of all (*Phil. 2:8-11*). Christians are *sealed* by Christ's death and share his new life (*Rom. 6:4*).

Lord of the living and of the dead. ¹⁰You, then—why do you pass judgment on your brother? And you—why do you despise your brother? All of us will stand before God, to be judged by him.

¹¹For the scripture says,

“As I live, says the Lord,
everyone will kneel before me,
and everyone will confess that I am
God.”

¹²Every one of us, then, will have to give an account of himself to God.

Do Not Make Your Brother Fall

¹³So then, let us stop judging one another. Instead, this is what you should decide: not to do anything that would make your brother stumble, or fall into sin. ¹⁴My union with the Lord Jesus makes me know for certain that nothing is unclean of itself; but if a man believes that something is unclean, then it becomes unclean for him. ¹⁵If you hurt your brother because of something you eat, then you are no longer acting from love. Do not let the food that you eat ruin

the living. You, then, why ¹⁰do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: ¹¹

“‘As I live,’ says the Lord,
‘Every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will confess
to God.’”

So then, each of us will give ¹²an account of himself to God.

Therefore, let us stop ¹³passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As ¹⁴one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is ¹⁵distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ

10. You, then. Christ is the one Lord and Judge. What right do you have to pass judgment on your brother? **Why do you despise?** The hypercritical pharasaic attitude is always sin. **All of us will stand.** When we *judge* our brother, we put ourself in God's place. But we are not judges, and all of us will stand before the Judge of all. As we remember this fact, we will avoid passing judgment on our brother and despising him. Compare *Matt. 7:1-2* and notes.

11. For the scripture says. A paraphrase of *Isa. 45:23*. Paul adds “As I live” to Isaiah's text to give it strong emphasis. The teachers of the Law said this spoke of Messiah's Kingdom. Compare *Acts 15:16-18*. But here Paul applies it to the “end of the world.”

12. Will have to give an account. “This is the reason you should not judge each other.” Only God has the authority to call us to account for our lives.

13. So then. If a Christian does what God tells him to do, he will have no time to do wrong. We must not waste time arguing personal opinions! **Not to do anything.** We are not to abuse our freedom in such a way that we destroy a weak brother. A Christian is responsible for the influence of his conduct. Paul seems to have in mind, the special case of eating meat which had been sacrificed to idols (which was sold at reduced prices).

14. Nothing is unclean of itself. The religious laws about food had been repealed. As a Christian, Paul has no scruples about food or drink or days. **But it becomes unclean for him.** Because his conscience is untrained, he has scruples, but he must be respected. Compare *verse 23*.

15. If you hurt your brother. “Your freedom of action is not worth the price of hurting your brother in Christ. Love doesn't act this way!” **Ruin** is a strong word. Christian freedom must not be used in such a way that it might destroy the work of the gospel. [This is dealing with matters of opinion. In matters of faith, other factors must be considered.]

the man for whom Christ died! ¹⁶Do not let what you regard as good acquire a bad name. ¹⁷For God's Kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy that the Holy Spirit gives. ¹⁸And whoever serves Christ in this way wins God's pleasure and man's approval.

¹⁹So then, we must always aim at those things that bring peace, and that help strengthen one another. ²⁰Do not, because of food, destroy what God has done. All foods may be eaten, but it is wrong to eat anything that will cause someone else to fall into sin. ²¹The right thing to do is to keep from eating meat, drinking wine, or doing anything else that will make your brother fall. ²²Keep what you believe about this matter, then, between yourself and God. Happy is the man who does not feel himself condemned

died. Do not allow what you ¹⁶ consider good to be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom ¹⁷ of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because ¹⁸ anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

Let us therefore make ¹⁹ every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the ²⁰ work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better ²¹ not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

So whatever you believe ²² about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by

16. **Do not let.** "Do not let your freedom in Christ become so repulsive to your weak brother that it seems to be blasphemy to him." Compare *1 Cor. 9:19-22; 10:28-33*.

17. **For God's Kingdom.** Eating and drinking are trivial matters, when compared with the great themes of righteousness, peace, and joy! **That the holy Spirit gives.** Compare *Gal. 5:22-23; John 7:38-39*.

18. **And whoever serves Christ.** No one can serve Christ if he cares nothing for the righteousness, peace, and joy that the Holy Spirit gives! An unselfish attitude pleases both God and man!

19. **We must always aim.** "In those matters that are *morally indifferent* [that make no difference, one way or the other] I must ask how my action or lack of action will affect the peace and growth of the church."

20. **Do not.** In some cases it is right for one man to restrict his action on the basis of another man's conscience. **All foods may be eaten**, even those which have been sacrificed to idols (*1 Cor. 10:27-29*). **But it is wrong.** It is a sin to cause someone to violate their conscience over trivial matters.

21. **The right thing to do.** Paul would not have written this chapter at all, if there had not been problems in the church at Rome over the use of meats and wine. Some had serious scruples about this, based on tradition and superstition. The strong brother must respect the conscience of the weak brother in such trivial matters of opinion. But the weak brother also has the duty to grow (*Heb. 5:11-14*).

22. **Keep what you believe.** Freedom must be balanced by a sense of responsibility. We may hold many opinions, but we may not force them on others. **Happy is the man.** "Happy is the man with a clear conscience, who does not allow himself to do those things which he secretly believes to be wrong."

when he does what he approves of! ²³But if he has doubts about what he eats, God condemns him when he eats it, because his action is not based on faith. And anything that is not based on faith is sin.

Please Others, Not Yourselfes

15 We who are strong in the faith ought to help the weak to carry their burdens. We should not please ourselves. ²Instead, each of us should please his brother for his own good, in order to build him up in the faith. ³For Christ did not please himself. Instead, as the scripture says, "The insults spoken by those who insulted you have fallen on me." ⁴Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement the Scriptures give us. ⁵And may God, the source of patience and encouragement, enable you to have the same point of view among yourselves by following the example of

what he approves. But the **23** man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

15 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as

23. But if he has doubts. The last half of *verse 22* begins this thought. The man who does allow himself to do those things which he secretly believes to be wrong, sins, and God condemns him. **Not based on faith is sin.** The context shows that Paul is saying that whenever a Christian does things he believes to be wrong (even though they are not contrary to God's law), they are sin for him. See *verse 14*. However, thinking a thing to be right does not make it right. Our faith must be based on God's Word!!! See *Heb. 5:14*.

1. We who are strong. Paul contrasts the strong and the weak in *chapter 14*. The strong are no longer slaves to tradition and superstition. The weak still are troubled by their scruples. A chain may only be as strong as its weakest link, but a congregation is as strong as its most spiritual member.

2. Each of us should please his brother. The pleasing of the brother is *for his own good, to build him up in the faith*. This does not mean we are to compromise Christian principles just to keep our brother happy. Compare *Col. 1:10; Gal. 1:10; 5:11-12*.

3. For Christ. He set the example for us by his action. **Instead.** Paul quotes *Psalms 69:9* Septuagint to prove this. The pain, torture, and shame Christ experienced in the process of fulfilling God's will, show he was not proud and selfish. [Compare *John 15:23-24*.]

4. Everything written in the Scriptures. The things in the Old Testament were written to teach us. **In order that.** In the Bible, hope is something you expect to happen! The patience and encouragement the Scriptures give us teach us to hope, even when we suffer for Christ. Compare *Rom. 5:2-5; James 1:2-4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17*.

5. To have the same point of view. If all share the *point of view* which Christ had (*verse 3*), we will work together for the common goal. **The example of Christ Jesus.** As a living sacrifice (*Rom. 12:1*), we live Christ's life (*Gal. 2:19-20*).

Christ Jesus, ⁶so that all of you together, with one voice, may praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel to the Gentiles

⁷Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you. ⁸Because I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jews to show that God is faithful, to make God's promises to the patriarchs come true, ⁹and also to enable the Gentiles to praise God for his mercy. As the scripture says,

"And so I will give thanks to you among the Gentiles,

I will sing praises to your name."

¹⁰Again it says,

"Rejoice, Gentiles, with God's chosen people!"

you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 6

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: 7 8 9

"For this reason I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name."

Again, it says, 10
"Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people."

6. **With one voice.** When the messianic community praises God *with one voice*, they will avoid the problems of *chapter 14*. Compare *John 17:21-23*.

7. **Accept one another.** *Verses 7-13* expand the idea in *verse 6*. We are to *keep on accepting* one another in spite of the differences of spiritual development (*John 6:37; Rom. 14:1*). We tend to think of the first century church in terms of small "house-churches," but the congregation at Jerusalem was probably 100,000 members, just before it was scattered. In one congregation you might find: Jews, Gentiles, slaves, slave-owners, free men, women who hate men, men who hate women, vegetarians, meat eaters, celibates, married couples, etc. *Christ had accepted each of them!* Therefore, they *MUST* accept each other!

8. **Because I tell you.** The promise of the Messiah was addressed to the Jew. Jesus, in his human existence, had the same relationship to the Law as any other Jew at that time (*Gal. 4:4-5; Matt. 15:24*). Paul shows us that Jesus made God's promises to the patriarchs come true! The truth of God, who made the promises, was shown to be true by Christ's service; for in him all the promises came true (*2 Cor. 1:20*).

9. **And also to enable the Gentiles.** It was never God's plan to limit his love to one nation or ethnic group. Paul quotes a series of excerpts from the Old Testament (Septuagint) to show the gospel was meant for everyone in the entire world!!! Not only did Jesus make God's promises to the patriarchs come true, he also enabled the Gentiles to praise God as well! **As the scripture says.** *Psalms 18:49 LXX*. Christ gives thanks to God among the Gentiles when the Gentiles give thanks to God through Christ (*compare Heb. 2:12*).

10. **Rejoice, Gentiles!** *Deut. 32:43 LXX*. This is a direct command to join Israel in praise of Israel's God! *Psalms 117:1* is similar.

¹¹And again,
 "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles;
 praise him, all peoples!"

¹²And again, Isaiah says,
 "A descendant of Jesse will come;
 he will be raised to rule the Gentiles,
 and they will put their hope in him."
¹³May God, the source of hope, fill you with all
 joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so
 that your hope will continue to grow by the power
 of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's Reason for Writing So Boldly

¹⁴My brothers: I myself feel sure that you are
 full of goodness, that you are filled with all know-
 ledge and are able to teach one another.
¹⁵But in this letter I have been quite bold about
 certain subjects of which I have reminded you. I
 have been bold because of the privilege God has
 given me ¹⁶of being a servant of Christ Jesus to
 work for the Gentiles. I serve like a priest in
 preaching the Good News from God, in order
 that the Gentiles may be an offering acceptable
 to God, dedicated to him by the Holy Spirit.

And again, 11
 "Praise the Lord, all you
 Gentiles,
 and sing praises to him,
 all you peoples,"
 And again, Isaiah says, 12
 "The root of Jesse will
 spring up,
 one who will arise to rule
 over the nations;
 the Gentiles will hope in
 him."
 May the God of hope fill 13
 you with great joy and peace
 as you trust in him, so that
 you may overflow with hope
 by the power of the Holy
 Spirit.

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

I myself am convinced, 14
 my brothers, that you your-
 selves are full of goodness,
 complete in knowledge and
 competent to instruct one
 another. I have written you 15
 quite boldly on some points,
 as if to remind you of them
 again, because of the grace
 God gave me to be a min- 16
 ister of Christ Jesus to the
 Gentiles with the priestly
 duty of proclaiming the gos-
 pel of God, so that the Gen-

11. **Praise the Lord, all Gentiles!** *Psalm 117:1 LXX*. The teachers of the Law understood this to point to the time of the Messiah. *Psalm 97:1* is similar.

12. **Isaiah says.** *Isa. 11:10 LXX*. This proves Christ was intended to be the Savior of the Gentiles! [If the Messiah has not come, Israel has a problem, since all the family records were lost in the siege of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), and none can claim to be descendants of David. (Jesse was David's father, but the teachers of the Law say David also had a son named Jesse.)]

13. **May God.** With these words of benediction, Paul closes his teaching message. The balance of the book of Romans is an epilogue. **Joy and peace** which come through being put right with God and becoming his friend. **The Holy Spirit.** Compare *John 7:38-39; Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:26-28; Gal 5:22-26*.

14. **My brothers.** Paul has scolded them, especially in *chapter 14*. This might be taken to imply he thought them ignorant of God's Truth, lacking in love, or both. But he didn't mean it that way, and gives reasons why he speaks so boldly to them. *My brothers* has a friendly sound to it. **Full of goodness.** "You are already full of goodness without any help from me." **Are able to teach.** "You already know the message of Christ and can teach it to others."

15. **But in this letter.** Paul had scolded them in certain things (such as *6:12-21; 11:17-20; 12:3; 14*). He did this to remind them of things they knew already but were overlooking. **Because of the privilege.** His authority as an apostle. Compare *Rom. 1:5; 12:3*.

16. **To work for the Gentiles.** Compare *Acts 26:17-18*. **I serve like a priest.** Paul preached the Good News of Christ to bring Gentiles as Christians to God. **Dedicated to him.** See *Titus 3:5; Rom. 8:1-2*.

¹⁷In union with Christ Jesus, then, I can be proud of my service for God. ¹⁸I will be bold and speak only of what Christ has done through me to lead the Gentiles to obey God, by means of words and deed, ¹⁹by the power of signs and miracles, and by the power of the Spirit. And so, in traveling all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum, I have proclaimed fully the Good News about Christ. ²⁰My ambition has always been to proclaim the Good News in places where Christ has not been heard of, so as not to build on the foundation laid by someone else. ²¹As the scripture says, "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²²For this reason I have been prevented many times from coming to you. ²³But now that I have finished my work in these regions, and since I have been wanting for so many years to come to

tiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, I glory in Christ ¹⁷ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak ¹⁸ of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— ¹⁹ by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition ²⁰ to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as ²¹ it is written:

"Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

This is why I have often been ²² hindered from coming to you.

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

But now that there is no ²³ more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many

17. **In union with Christ Jesus.** See *Phil.* 3:3-14. I can be proud. Paul did an amazing job of missions for Christ. Yet only his union with Christ made it possible for him to be proud (*1 Cor.* 15:31).

18. **What Christ has done through me.** Two things are here: (1) Paul speaks only of what Christ has done through him to reach the Gentiles; (2) Paul is the *tool*, and it is Christ who uses him and directs him, including this letter to the Roman Christians.

19. **By the power.** This was both proof of his apostleship (*2 Cor.* 12:12) and supernatural help for his work of missions (*1 Thess.* 1:5). **And so, in traveling.** He emphasizes the area he covered on his tours of mission. **I have proclaimed fully.** See *Acts* 20:20-21. Paul had fulfilled his mission as an apostle, to preach the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free and to plant the church in the population-centers of the world!

20. **My ambition.** Paul had made it a point to begin new works in places where Christ was unknown. This was his special mission as an apostle. Yet there is a place and a need for a different kind of ministry (*1 Cor.* 3:5-9).

21. **As the scripture says.** *Isa.* 52:15 LXX. As an inspired apostle, Paul uses this quotation to show he has God's authority for the work he has done.

22. **For this reason.** He points back to *verse* 20. See also *Acts* 19:21; 23:11; 28:16-24.

23. **But now.** Paul had completed his mission in the area around Corinth and was ready to come to Rome. He wrote this letter in the spring of 57 A.D., but did not get to Rome until March of 60 A.D.

see you, ²⁴I hope to do so now. I would like to see you on my way to Spain, and be helped by you to go there, after I have enjoyed visiting you for a while. ²⁵Right now, however, I am going to Jerusalem in the service of God's people there. ²⁶For the churches in Macedonia and Greece have freely decided to give an offering to help the poor among God's people in Jerusalem. ²⁷They themselves decided to do it. But, as a matter of fact, they have an obligation to help those poor; the Jews shared their spiritual blessings with the Gentiles, and so the Gentiles ought to serve the Jews with their material blessings. ²⁸When I have finished this task, and have turned over to them the full amount of money that has been raised for them, I shall leave for Spain and visit you on my way there. ²⁹When I come to you, I know that I shall come with a full measure of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love that the Spirit gives: join me in

years to see you, I plan to do ²⁴so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my ²⁵way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were ²⁶pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They ²⁷were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have ²⁸shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. So ²⁸after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and ²⁹visit you on the way. I know ²⁹that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

I urge you, brothers, by ³⁰our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by pray-

24. **On my way to Spain.** He wanted to visit the messianic community at Rome, but his sense of mission would not allow him to stay there. His plans were to begin a new work in Spain. But God changed his plans! See notes on *Acts 21:13-14; 28:16*.

25. **Right now, however.** See *Acts 24:17*. He was taking money to the poor in the church at Jerusalem.

26. **For the churches in Macedonia and Greece.** See *1 Cor. 16:2-1; 2 Cor. 8:1; 9:2-15*.

27. **They themselves decided to do it.** It was their free will to do this, not an *official assessment*. *Why this need at Jerusalem???* (1) Many of the poor became Christians (*Gal. 2:10; Acts 6:1-6*); (2) persecution caused many to lose all they had, including their job. *Have you paid your debt to the Jews???*

28. **When I have finished this task.** Paul seems to think this contribution from the Gentile churches will help solve the schism which threatens the church at this time. Compare notes on *Acts 21:13-14*. **I shall leave for Spain.** He was not able to do this. However traditional history says that after Paul was released from his imprisonment at Rome in 62 A.D. (*Ramsay*), he did go to Spain, and also to parts of the East, before his second imprisonment and death in 67 A.D. (*Ramsay*).

29. **With a full measure of the blessing of Christ.** He certainly did not expect to reach Rome as a prisoner (see note on *Acts 28:16*). Yet his coming was with this blessing (*Rom. 1:11; Acts 28:30-31*).

30. **I urge you, brothers.** Paul was very much aware of the danger he would face at Jerusalem (*Acts 20:22-24*). **In praying fervently to God for me.** This shows the value Paul placed on prayer! Compare *James 5:16*.

praying fervently to God for me. ³¹Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to God's people there. ³²And so I will come to you full of joy, if it is God's will, and enjoy a refreshing visit with you. ³³May God, our source of peace, be with all of you. Amen.

Personal Greetings

16 I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, who serves the church at Cenchreae. ²Receive her in the Lord's name, as God's people should, and give her any help she may need from you; for she herself has been a good friend to many people and also to me.

³I send greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in the service of Christ Jesus,

ing to God for me. Pray that **31**
I may be rescued from the
unbelievers in Judea and
that my service in Jerusalem
may be acceptable to the
saints there. Then by God's **32**
will I can come to you with
joy and together with you be
refreshed. The God of peace **33**
be with all of you. Amen.

Personal Greetings

16 I commend to you our
sister Phoebe, a ser-
vant of the church in Cen-
chreae. I ask you to receive **2**
her in the Lord in a way
worthy of the saints and to
give her any help she may
need from you, for she has
been a great help to many
people, including me.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, **3**
my fellow workers in

31-32. **Pray that I may be kept safe.** He knew the hostility of the unbelieving Jews! **And that my service.** Paul saw a real danger that even the Christian Jews would be hostile toward him. Some thought he was a traitor to the Law, and distorted versions of his teaching had been circulated (*Acts 21:21*). He was afraid they might think the money was a *bribe*. He asks their prayer for: (1) his personal safety; (2) that his service would be accepted by the Jerusalem Christians; (3) that he may go to Spain, with a stop-over in Rome.

33. **May God.** Since he asks their prayers, it is only natural that he prays for them. Compare *1 Thess. 1:2-3*. How amazing it is to be able to come to the God of the Universe and speak to Him as "Father! my Father!" (*Rom. 8:15*).

1. **I recommend to you.** This is Paul's official statement certifying that she is a member in good standing. She was probably a business woman (such as Lydia, *Acts 16:14*). Paul's language implies she was on her way to Rome on business, and that they could help her. We think she took this letter to the Roman church. **Our sister Phoebe.** We are brothers and sisters in Christ! **Who serves the church.** **DIAKONOS** - the exact same word translated "church helper" [deacon] in *1 Tim. 3:8*. Conditions of ancient society required the feminine version of *church helpers* to take care of the needs of certain women. Some of them were likely the wives of men who served as *church helpers* (see *1 Tim. 3:11*), and there may have been the feminine version of *church leaders* who taught the younger women under conditions and in situations where it would have been impossible for a man to do so (see *1 Tim. 5:9-10*). Jewish women had much more freedom than Gentile women (see *1 Cor. 11:1-10*). **Cenchreae.** This was the seaport of Corinth, on the Asian side.

2. **As God's people should.** Their Christian life was to be open for her to share in it. **Give her any help.** The Greek word is a legal term, which implies her business was a legal matter. **For she herself has been a good friend.** Perhaps in her role as a *church helper*. One of those which she had helped was Paul himself. *Gifford* thinks Paul's vow in Cenchreae (*Acts 18:18*) implies sickness, and that Phoebe helped him at that time.

3. **To Priscilla and Aquila.** They had left Rome when Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews (*Acts 18:2*), had gone to Ephesus (*Acts 18:19*), and now were back in Rome. Priscilla is mentioned first, implying she was the more dominant one of the couple.

⁴who risked their lives for me. I am grateful to them—not only I, but all the Gentile churches as well. ⁵Greetings also to the church that meets in their house.

Greetings to my dear friend Epænetus, who was the first man in the province of Asia to believe in Christ. ⁶Greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for you. ⁷Greetings to Andronicus and Junias, fellow Jews who were in prison with me; they are well known among the apostles, and they became Christians before I did.

⁸My greetings to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the fellowship of the Lord. ⁹Greetings to Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ's service, and to Stachys, my dear friend. ¹⁰Greetings to Apelles, whose loyalty to Christ has been proved. Greetings to those who belong to the family of

Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 4

Greet also the church that meets at their house. 5

Greet my dear friend Epænetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. 6

Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. 7

Greet Ampliatus, whom I love in the Lord. 8

Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 9

Greet Apelles, tested and approved in Christ. 10

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

4. **Who risked their lives for me.** We know nothing at all about this. But much of Paul's experiences are not told to us (see *2 Cor. 11:23-27*). **Not only I.** The incident where they had risked their lives had happened long enough in the past to be well known among all the Gentile churches, but recent enough to be fresh in Paul's mind.

5. **Greetings also.** See note on *Col. 4:15*. **Epænetus.** Most of these whom Paul sends greetings, are unknown to us today. **In the province of Asia.** *Achaia* is an incorrect reading. Asia is the Roman province of that name. *Sanday and Headlam* mention the discovery of an Ephesian Epænetus on a Roman inscription.

6. **Greetings to Mary.** Most of these were personal friends of Paul; some had done him special favors; and many had been led to Christ by him.

7. **Andronicus and Junias.** Paul is writing to a church mostly made up of Gentiles. It is only natural that he mentions these two as "fellow Jews," and also that they had been in prison with him. When, we do not know. **They became Christians before I did.** This would help explain why they were so well known by the apostles. Compare *Acts 21:16*.

8. **Ampliatus.** A common Roman slave name. A person of this name was well known in the earliest Roman church.

9. **Urbanus.** Another common slave name. **Stachys.** We know only that he was a dear friend to Paul. These three men are connected with the Imperial household by inscriptions which have been found.

10. **Apelles.** A common Jewish name. **Family of Aristobulus.** *Lightfoot* makes Aristobulus the grandson of Herod the Great. "Family" here refers to those Christians who belong to his household. He may have died, in which case his slaves and servants would have been transferred to the palace of Claudius. However, they may have been part of his family, as we use the word (compare *Luke 8:3*).

Aristobulus. ¹¹Greetings to Herodion, a fellow Jew, and to the Christian brothers in the family of Narcissus.

¹²My greetings to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who work in the Lord's service, and to my dear friend Persis, who has done so much work for the Lord. ¹³I send greetings to Rufus, that outstanding worker in the Lord's service, and to his mother, who has always treated me like a son.

¹⁴My greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the other Christian brothers with them. ¹⁵Greetings to Philologus and Julia, to Nereus and his sister, to Olympas and to all of God's people who are with them.

¹⁶Greet one another with a brotherly kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

Final Instructions

¹⁷I urge you, my brothers: watch out for those who cause divisions and upset people's faith, who go against the teaching which you have received;

Greet Herodion, my relative. ¹¹
Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them.

Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the churches of Christ send greetings.

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way, contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from

11. **Herodion.** He may have been a part of the "family of Aristobulus." **Family of Narcissus.** This is probably the Narcissus who had been killed by Nero two or three years before Paul wrote this letter. His slaves and servants were made part of the Imperial palace.

12. **Tryphaena and Tryphosa.** These two women were probably sisters. They were very active in the Lord's work. **Persis.** Another woman, who was especially loved for her work in the past. *Johnson* thinks all three were *deaconesses* [church helpers].

13. **Rufus.** This may be the Rufus of *Mark 15:21*.

14. **My greetings.** The Christians mentioned in this verse may have formed a "house church." **Hermas** is sometimes identified as the author of "The Shepherd of Hermas," an early Christian writing, but the Canon of Muratori says this is not so.

15. **Philologus and Julia.** Probably husband and wife. Both are common slave names. **Nereus and his sister.** *Lightfoot* thinks the sister's name was Nereis, and that both were part of the palace staff. These, together with Olympas and the others, may have formed a "house church."

16. **With a brotherly kiss.** *Denny* says: "The custom of combining greeting and kiss was oriental, and especially Jewish, and in this way became Christian." Our equivalent would be a *warm handshake*. **All the churches of Christ.** *Sanday and Headlam* say: "This phrase is unique in the New Testament." Compare *Matt. 16:18*.

17. **Watch out for those who cause divisions.** **SKOPEIN** = watch out for, keep one's attention on. Paul is warning them against a danger which he has seen in other places. he may be thinking about: (1) the circumcision party; (2) the immorality of false teachers; (3) the antinomian reactionaries. See *Acts 15:5; Phil. 3:18-19; 1 Tim. 6:3-5*. **Keep away from them.** As you would quarantine a disease-carrier.

keep away from them. ¹⁸For those who do such things are not serving Christ our Lord, but their own appetites. By their fine words and flattering speech they deceive the minds of innocent people. ¹⁹Everyone has heard of your loyalty to the gospel, and for this reason I am happy about you. I want you to be wise about what is good, but innocent in what is evil. ²⁰And God, our source of peace, will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings; and so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, fellow Jews.

²²I, Tertius, the writer of this letter, send you Christian greetings.

²³My host Gaius, in whose house the church meets, sends you his greetings; Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, send you their greetings.

[²⁴The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

them. For such people are **18** not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has **19** heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

The God of peace will **20** soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Timothy, my fellow work- **21** er, sends his greeting to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

I, Tertius, who wrote down **22** this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Gaius, whose hospitality I **23** and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.*

18. **Are not serving Christ our Lord.** Paul speaks bitterly of their *character*, rather than the doctrines they teach. This contrasts sharply with the character of those who serve Christ. **Innocent people.** Compare 2 Tim. 3:5-6.

19. **Everyone has heard of your loyalty.** "You are such loyal Christians that you should not be fooled by such as these false teachers!" **But innocent.** Compare Phil. 2:15-16.

20. **Will soon crush Satan.** "False teachers may come and cause division, but God who is our source of peace will give you the victory over Satan!!" **The Grace.** This benediction makes some think verses 1-20 were originally a short letter that Paul had intended to send the Roman church.

21. **Timothy.** He was one of Paul's associates. He was with Paul (Acts 20:4-5) when he began his trip to Jerusalem (mentioned in Rom. 15:25). The other three cannot be identified. [The *names* are found in Acts 13:1; 17:5; 20:4, but these cannot be positively connected.]

22. **Tertius.** He did the writing as Paul dictated it. Some think Paul had eye trouble (see Gal. 6:11). He often wrote the benediction himself (see 1 Cor. 16:21; 2 Thess. 3:17).

23. **Gaius.** Since Paul is in Corinth as he writes this, Gaius is probably the one mentioned in 1 Cor. 1:14. **Erastus** might be the one mentioned in Acts 19:22; 2 Tim. 4:20. **Quartus** must have had some special connection with Rome.

24. **The grace.** Verses 21-24 are personal greetings from Paul's companions. This is the benediction.

* Some MSS add verse 24: *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.*

Concluding Prayer of Praise

²⁵Let us give glory to God! He is able to make you stand firm in your faith, according to the Good News I preach, the message about Jesus Christ, and according to the revelation of the secret truth which was hidden for long ages in the past. ²⁶Now, however, that truth has been brought out into the open through the writings of the prophets; and by the command of the eternal God it is made known to all nations, so that all may believe and obey.

²⁷To the only God, who alone is all-wise, be the glory through Jesus Christ forever! Amen.

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

25. **Let us give glory to God!** With these words Paul begins his doxology, which is a brief statement of all the important principles explained in this letter. **He is able.** Paul may be speaking about God the Holy Spirit. Compare *Rom. 1:11; 14:4; John 16:7-14; Eph. 3:20. According to the Good News.* Compare *Rom. 1:16-17. The secret truth.* Compare *Rom. 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:7-10.*

26. **Now, however.** Compare *Luke 24:27, 44-47.* That *Truth* is God's salvation centered in One Person - Jesus Christ. See *Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11; Col. 2:9; 1 John 1:1-4. And by the command.* Salvation in Christ is by the command of the eternal God!!! This is the eternal Plan!!! See *Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8.* God acted in Christ to set us free. We reach out through faith to seize Christ's sacrifice and make ourselves part of it!!! Paul and the others gave their very lives to make known to all nations this Good News of salvation in Christ.

27. **To the only God.** Paul is a "Mono-Theistic Trinitarian." To believe in three gods is paganism. Yet it is a PARADOX in human terms that the One God exists in three persons: The Father, The Son, The Holy Spirit. The emphasis here is on *the God*, who alone is all-wise, who is the SOURCE of the gospel which Paul preaches!!! **Through Jesus Christ forever!** The eternal Plan of salvation has been worked out in Jesus Christ. God acted in history! Our salvation is based upon what God ALREADY has done in Jesus Christ! We cannot be saved by our own merit, and praise God, we don't have to be!!! We can reach to seize the MERIT of Christ's *life and death and resurrection, AND MAKE OURSELVES PART OF IT!*

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST CORINTHIANS

The success of Christianity in the Gentile world of the first century becomes a miracle, when you look closely at what happened. For a Gentile to turn to Christ, he had to repudiate the worship of idols *and all they represented!* He had to reject a large part of his native society (of which idols were an integral part); clean up his life (*compare 1 Pet. 4:3-5*); and *disbelieve* most of what he had been taught was true! The fact that so many Gentiles did come to Christ is a strong testimony to the power of the Good News. The message of the Cross is *offensive* to the Jews, and *nonsense* to the Gentiles - yet it is *the power of God to salvation!!!*

In a world where immorality was the *normal* way of life, Corinth stood out like a "sore thumb." So bad was its reputation, that "to Corinthianize" meant to live a wicked life. The temple of Venus-Aphrodite-Artemis had 1,000 prostitutes who were its "priestesses." Temples of Serapis and Isis spread Egyptian mysticism. The sea-god Poseidon was the "sponsor" of the famous Isthmian games (similar to the Olympics). It was in this city, the capital of Roman Greece, probably fourth in size in the empire, that Paul planted the church of Christ on his second tour of missions (*see Acts 18*).

Paul wrote First Corinthians from Ephesus during his three year work there (*1 Cor. 16:8; Acts 19:1-41; 20:31*), probably in the spring of 55 A.D. He had written them before this (*1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1*), and they had answered back before he wrote this letter. It is worth notice that Paul did not write the "faithful few" to split off and start a "faithful church." Instead he commands *unity*. Many serious problems existed in the church at Corinth, yet Paul writes to them as the "*church of God which is in Cor-*

inth.” Paul’s letter was to answer their questions, to scold them in some things, and to encourage them to “be *one* in Christ.” These questions and problems will be examined carefully in the notes on this letter.

There is a unity of thought in First Corinthians. The gospel which Paul preaches is fully able to meet the arrogant claims of Gentile “wisdom” and the evil desires of human nature. From the height of the Cross, the piercing ray of Truth shines into the depths of pagan sin. This is the *letter* of “the Cross in its social application.”

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

1 From Paul, who by the will of God was called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes—

2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to all who are called to be God's holy people, who belong to him in union with Christ Jesus, together with all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

3 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Blessing in Christ

4 I always give thanks to my God for you, because of the grace he has given you through Christ Jesus. **5** For in union with Christ you have become rich in all things, including all speech and all knowledge. **6** The message about Christ

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ their Lord and ours: **2**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3**

Thanksgiving

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. **4**
5
6

1. Who by the will of God. After Paul had left Corinth, some of the "Circumcision party" had come to the church and tried to destroy his authority as an apostle. They said he had not been made an apostle by God, as had the Twelve. He states his authority as an apostle in strong terms (see also *1 Cor.* 9:1; *2 Cor.* 12:12). **Sosthenes.** He may be the synagogue-leader of *Acts* 18:17, who is now a Christian. [Compare Crispus in *verse* 14.] He is not writing this letter for Paul, but only sends his greetings. However, as an ex-leader of the synagogue, his approval of what Paul writes would carry some weight with the Jewish Christians.

2. To the church of God. This is the most common name for Christ's church in the New Testament. [*Names of the church:* see note on *2 Thess.* 1:3-5.] **To all who are called.** The technical word is "sanctified." See note on *Rom.* 8:29-30. All Christians are "called" to be God's holy people. The least important Christian is as much one of God's holy people as is Peter or Paul. **Together with.** This letter is intended for the entire messianic community. **Who call upon the name.** *Eph.* 6:24. **Their Lord and ours.** In contrast to the "party spirit" of the Corinthian church, Paul stresses our ONENESS in the One Lord.

3. Give you grace and peace. See note on *Rom.* 1:7. This is Paul's "word of blessing."

4. I always give thanks. Before Paul scolds them, he first praises the good things in their lives. Along with their faults, he could see the rich blessings of Christ in their lives. A good example for all critics!

5. For in union with Christ. This points back to the "grace he has given you" of *verse* 4. The actual grace which they already have received in being joined to Christ. **Including.** The Corinthians were excessively proud of their speaking ability and their knowledge. The reference here includes those supernatural gifts from the Spirit (*1 Cor.* 12:8-10; *2 Cor.* 8:7; 11:6).

6. Has become so firmly fixed in you. The reality and truth of it were clearly shown to them. Compare *1 Thess.* 1:5-6 and note.

has become so firmly fixed in you, ⁷that you have not failed to receive a single blessing, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be found without fault in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is to be trusted, the God who called you to have fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Therefore you do not lack ⁷ any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to ⁸ the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellow- ⁹ ship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Divisions in the Church

¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ: agree, all of you, in what you say, so that there will be no divisions among you. Be completely united, with only one thought and one purpose. ¹¹For some people from Chloe's family have told me quite plainly, my brothers, that there are quarrels among you. ¹²Let me put it this way: each one of you says something different. One says, "I am with Paul"; another, "I am with Apollos"; another, "I am with

Divisions in the Church

I appeal to you, brothers, ¹⁰ in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My ¹¹ brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is ¹² this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

7. **That you have not failed to receive.** There are no "second-class Christians!" These had the *present truth* firmly fixed in them, and the Spirit had given gifts to the community of believers (compare *Eph. 4:7-13*). **As you wait.** They had received the *present good*, but expected far greater blessing when Christ Comes!

8. **Keep you firm to the end.** Compare *Phil. 1:6*; *1 Thess. 5:23*. Paul does not say they are *without fault* now, he hopes they will be *then*.

9. **God is to be trusted.** Paul's trust is in God! God has already acted in history, through Christ, to set men free. God will not withdraw his offer of salvation! Both God and Christ guarantee the offer of salvation!!! **To have fellowship with.** God calls everyone to come and be part of the church (messianic community) of which Christ is head. Compare *Gal. 3:26-29*.

10. **I appeal to you, brothers.** Paul could not in honesty give thanks for the condition of the Corinthian church! **Agree, all of you.** The Christians at Corinth were competing with one another. Compare *verse 12*. **Be completely united.** Christians are ONE in Christ! However, the Mysterious Wickedness (*2 Thess. 2:7*) was already at work. The church of the first century had every problem which the church of today has!!!

11. **From Chloe's family.** This is his authority for making such a serious charge against them. Paul had an eyewitness to all that was happening there. **That there are quarrels.** Differences of opinion which were forming parties within the church.

12. **One says.** Paul shows that there were four parties in this church. **Paul.** Some looked to Paul as their hero, since he had planted the church there. **Apollos.** He was an eloquent speaker (*Acts 18:24*), but Paul was not (*2 Cor. 11:6*). This made Apollos a hero to some. **Peter.** The "Circumcision party" made a hero out of Peter, as they tried to destroy the influence of Paul. **Christ.** See *2 Cor. 10:7*. *MacKnight* thinks these were Jews who had heard Christ preach during his earthly ministry, and who now made this fact a thing of *pride*. *Rice Haggard* writes: "When the followers of Christ are divided into different parties, and choose to be called by different names, a great deal of the preacher's time and studies is

Peter"; and another, "I am with Christ."¹³ Christ has been divided into groups! Was it Paul who died on the cross for you? Were you baptized as Paul's disciples?

¹⁴I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. ¹⁵No one can say, then, that you were baptized as my disciples. ¹⁶(Oh yes, I also baptized Stephanas and his family; but I can't remember whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷Christ did not send me to baptize. He sent me to tell the Good News, and to tell it without using the language of men's wisdom, to keep Christ's death on the cross from being robbed of its power.

Christ the Power and the Wisdom of God

¹⁸For the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the

spent in inventing and vending arguments to draw persons over to their respective parties. Hence the holy scriptures must be bent and twisted in support of them: to which purpose those divine materials will never submit. For who does not know, that if the Scriptures are consistent, they never can support so many parties, and those too so widely different?"

13. **Christ has been divided into groups!** [The TEV follows Lachmann, Westcott and Hort, Meyer, Beet, et. al., and reads this as an *exclamation*.] The church is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Can that body be cut up into pieces which are assigned to human leaders??? The Cross brings us into union with Christ alone. Compare Rom. 6:3-4.

14. **That I did not baptize.** Paul shows horror at the thought of any being baptized in his own name as his disciples! He *thinks God* that he personally did not baptize very many of them. "And many other people in Corinth heard the message, believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). But it was the associates of Paul who did the actual work of baptizing. He did this so that no one could claim he baptized in his own name (verse 15). **Crispus.** Formerly the synagogue-leader at Corinth (Acts 18:8). **Gaius.** See Rom. 16:23.

15. **No one can say.** Paul wanted none of the glory for himself! The Good News was about God's act in Christ!!!

16. (Oh yes.) He may have been reminded by Stephanus himself. See 1 Cor. 16:15-17. On the meaning of "family," see note on Rom. 16:10.

17. **Christ did not send me to baptize.** If traditional views of Paul's physical condition are true, he did not have the strength to do much baptizing (since it was immersion). The point here is that his helpers could take care of the work of baptizing, while he spent his time telling the Good News. [The apostles were sent to baptize, Matt. 28:19. But after baptizing the first few converts, they turned that matter over to them.] **Without using the language of men's wisdom.** This is in contrast with the *philosophical style* of the Greek philosophers. The Good News of Christ is not an *ideology* to be dissected and argued over. It is a message from God to be believed! Good News only needs to be told. God's power is in the **FACTS** of his historical act in Christ. See verse 21.

18. **For the message.** The gospel of a Crucified Savior. **Is nonsense.** Both Greek philosopher and Jewish teacher of the Law rejected the whole idea of a Savior who had been put to death on a cross. **It is God's**

for us who are being saved, it is God's power.

¹⁹The scripture says,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and set aside the understanding of the
scholars."

²⁰So then, where does that leave the wise men?
Or the scholars? Or the skillful debaters of this
world? God has shown that this world's wisdom
is foolishness!

²¹For God, in his wisdom, made it impossible
for men to know him by means of their own
wisdom. Instead, God decided to save those who
believe, by means of the "foolish" message we
preach. ²²Jews want miracles for proof, and
Greeks look for wisdom. ²³As for us, we pro-
claim Christ on the cross, a message that is offen-
sive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles;

power of God. For it is writ- 19
ten:

"I will destroy the wisdom
of the wise;
the intelligence of the in-
telligent I will frus-
trate."

Where is the wise man? 20
Where is the scholar?
Where is the philosopher of
this age? Has not God made
foolish the wisdom of the
world? For since in the wis- 21
dom of God the world
through its wisdom did not
know him, God was pleased
through the foolishness of
what was preached to save
those who believe. Jews 22
demand miraculous signs and
Greeks look for wisdom, but 23
we preach Christ crucified: a
stumbling block to Jews and

power. People divide themselves into two groups on the basis of Christ. Those who are *being lost* make fun of the whole idea. Those who are *being saved* see the Cross as "God's act to set men free!"

19. **I will destroy.** *Isaiah 29:14 Septuagint.* It is not wisdom and scholarship which saves, but God's power!

20. **So then?** Paul uses some of the language of *Isa. 19:11-12 LXX* to challenge those who are so proud of this world's wisdom. **Wise men.** Such as Pharaoh's advisers. **Scholars.** Such as the Jewish teachers of the Law. **Skillful debaters.** The Greek philosophers liked nothing better than to argue and dissect theories. The public enjoyed hearing this kind of thing also. **God has shown.** God's Truth is deliberately made contrary to what the world *thinks* is wisdom!

21. **For God.** The Greek philosophers were some of the most intelligent men ever to live on this earth. With no tools but their own minds, they explored the limits of our creation and developed some startling concepts, over 2,000 years ago, that form the basis of our modern science. Yet with all their genius, they did not search out the True God (compare *Acts 17:22-32*)! **By means of.** It is by the "foolish message" of a crucified Savior that God saves those who believe.

22. **Jews want miracles.** They wanted some spectacular miracle from heaven that only God could do, as proof (compare notes on *Matt. 16:1-4*). **Greeks look for wisdom.** Some complex and elaborate system of ideology [doctrine] (compare note on *Acts 17:18*).

23. **We proclaim Christ on the cross.** Compare *1 Cor. 15:1-4*. This was "God's act in Christ to set men free!" Note: not "Christ the crucified," nor "Christ crucified," but *Christ on the cross!* [The TEV correctly translates *ESTAUFOMENON* as a *predicative adjunct* emphasizing the verbal action.] Not a warrior Messiah, flashing signs of great power from the sky, but a Messiah dying helplessly in shame and disgrace. Compare *2 Cor. 4:10; 13:4*. The Jewish *Talmud* calls him *HATTALUY - the hanged* (compare *Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13*). **Offensive to the Jews.** Because they expected a warrior Messiah who would free them from Roman oppression. **Nonsense to the Gentiles.** The Eternal Logos dying helplessly on the cross was an impossible idea to them.

²⁴but for those whom God has called, both Jews and Gentiles, this message is Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than men's wisdom, and what seems to be God's weakness is stronger than men's strength.

²⁶Now remember what you were, brothers, when God called you. Few of you were wise, or powerful, or of high social standing, from the human point of view. ²⁷God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to put wise men to shame, and what the world considers weak in order to put powerful men to shame. ²⁸He chose what the world looks down on, and despises, and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. ²⁹This means that no one can boast in God's presence. ³⁰But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom; by him we are put right with

foolishness to Gentiles, but ²⁴ to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of ²⁵ God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Brothers, think of what ²⁶ you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the ²⁷ foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He ²⁸ chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no ²⁹ man may boast before him. It is because of him that you ³⁰ are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from

24. **But for those.** *MacKnight* sees the *called* as those who have heard and responded to the message of the Cross. **This message is Christ** = we proclaim Christ on the cross. **Who is** both the *miracle* the Jews want and the *wisdom* the Greeks look for. "*The power of God,*" and "*the wisdom of God*" were synonyms of the *Logos* in the Alexandrian-Jewish philosophy (in which Apollos was an expert). There is a triumphant note to Paul's words in the balance of this chapter! The believing Jew found in the cross God's greatest miracle! The believing Greek found in the cross the deepest wisdom of God!

25. **For what seems to be.** Things are not always what they seem to be! If the *foolishness* and *weakness* are God's, these will be *wiser* and *stronger* than anything man has!

26. **Now remember what you were.** Most Christians were from the common people. **Few of you.** Note he says "few," which means that some were from each class he names. Compare *John 12:42*. Paul's reasoning here: (1) brings down the conceit of his readers (*1 Cor. 6:9-11; 4:7-13*); (2) reveals the true mission of the gospel.

27. **God purposely chose.** The Greek philosophers were saying that the gospel was *nonsense* and *weakness*. Paul imitates their language and turns it against them! *The pride* of the cultured and ruling classes of paganism was to be put to shame by the powers and blessings which Christianity gave to *its social outcasts*.

28. **He chose.** Compare *1 John 2:15-17*. Through the "weakness" of the gospel, the religions, governments, and even civilizations of the world were to be overturned! Not through armed violence, but by changing people (*Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17*).

29. **That no one can boast.** Compare *Rom. 3:27-28; Eph. 2:8-10*. "The source of your salvation is God's act in Christ, not your own wisdom and strength."

30. **But God has brought you.** *MacKnight* sees this emphasizing God's side of salvation, in which he alone is said to bring us into union with Christ. See notes on *Rom. 8:29-30*. **To be our wisdom.** Paul's whole line of reasoning is based on this fact. We see God change human wisdom into foolishness (*verses*

God, we become God's holy people, and are set free. ³¹So then, as the scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done."

The Message about Christ on the Cross

2 When I came to you, my brothers, to preach God's secret truth to you, I did not use long words and great learning. ²For I made up my mind to forget everything while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and especially his death on the cross. ³So when I came to you I was weak and trembled all over with fear, ⁴and my teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing

God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

2 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's

20-25). he did this for our salvation (*1 Cor. 2:7*) - to prove and demonstrate his own wisdom (*verse 24*), and give it to us [all Christians] in Christ. This wisdom is a life-giving moral force direct from God himself (*James 3:17-18*). *Wisdom* stands by itself; the other three things define it. **Put right** = Counted as righteous through Christ. **We become** = a new being (*2 Cor. 5:17*). **Are set free** = we will be raised from death (*Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30*). Christ is all of these to us!!!

31. **As the scripture says.** [*Jer. 9:23*.] By "the Lord," we can only understand Christ. Whoever wants to boast cannot boast in the messengers who proclaimed the Good News to them, but in the Lord Jesus Christ who has brought them into his church!!!

1. **When I came to you.** In *chapter 1*, Paul showed that God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense and weak, to put to shame and to destroy what the world thinks is important. To the Corinthian Christians he says: (1) the gospel is no philosophy; (2) you are no philosophers. He returns to his starting point: that Christ sent him to tell the Good News - in contrast to men's wisdom (*1 Cor. 1:17*). [MUSTERION = something secret which has now been made known.] Paul explains this in *verses 7-10*. **Long words and great learning.** He did not use these on the Areopagus either (see *Acts 17:22-31*). Paul's style of preaching was determined by the message. His emphasis was on the fact of God's act in Christ, not on eloquence and men's wisdom.

2. **Except Jesus Christ.** If Paul were to proclaim a different message, he would use a different style. But he was simply telling the Good News of Christ. Therefore, he used a simple, direct style, because he did not want anything to detract from the power of "Christ on the cross!"

3. **So when I came to you.** *Verses 1-2* tell how Paul *did not come*. *Verses 3-5* tell how he *did come*. **Weak and trembled.** The Greeks evaluated their philosophers by the power and style of their speaking. Paul deliberately used a style that was "weak and trembled all over with fear." [Some think his physical condition had something to do with this.] *Verse 5* shows why he did this.

4. **Were not delivered.** He did not use the skillful words that brainwash a person without really teaching him anything. **But with convincing proof.** The Truth was made known by the Spirit and proved by supernatural powers. Compare *1 Thess 1:5* and note.

proof of the power of God's Spirit. ⁵Your faith, then, does not rest on man's wisdom, but on God's power.

God's Wisdom

⁶Yet I do speak wisdom to those who are spiritually mature. But it is not the wisdom that belongs to this world, or to the powers that rule this world—powers that are losing their power. ⁷The wisdom I speak is God's secret wisdom, hidden from men, which God had already chosen for our glory even before the world was made. ⁸None of the rulers of this world knew this wisdom. If they had known it, they would not have nailed the Lord of glory to the cross. ⁹However, as the scripture says,
 "What no man ever saw or heard,

power, so that your faith ⁵ might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Wisdom from the Spirit

We do, however, speak ⁶ a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, ⁷ we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the ⁸ rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it ⁹ is written:

"No eye has seen,
 no ear has heard,
 no mind has conceived
 what God has prepared
 for those who love him"

5. Your faith, then. This whole paragraph grows out of "When I came" in *verse 1*. He points back to his original work at Corinth. Paul was God's spokesman; therefore he acted so that God alone would receive the glory (see note on *1 Cor. 1:31*). If he had persuaded the Corinthians with skillful words and blended Christianity with Greek philosophy, his work would have been destroyed with the wisdom of this world (see *1 Cor. 1:19; 3:18-20*).

6. Yet I do speak wisdom. So far Paul has said that his message is "nonsense," *out of step* with the wisdom of this world. Yet at the same time, he makes it plain that his message (the gospel) is in the truest sense: "God's wisdom!" But, he points out, *only to those qualified to understand it!* **Spiritually mature.** *Evans* writes: "The curtain must be lifted with a caution measured by the spiritual intelligence of the spectators." See *verse 14*. **Powers that rule this world.** *Locke* understands these to be the Jewish rulers and their distorted form of Judaism (*as Gal. 1:14*). Probably all human rulers can be included in this. [Some think evil spirits are meant, since they are the source of idolatry, false religions, etc. (*Eph. 6:12*), but *verse 8* speaks of the rulers of this world who crucified Jesus.] **That are losing their power.** Wise in their own ways, but not in God's, they must fall and lose their power.

7. God's secret wisdom. The world does not understand the value of God's wisdom in "Christ on the cross," because they are completely unqualified to do so. The Corinthian Christians only partly understood, because they were "spiritual babies" (*1 Cor. 3:1-3*). **Hidden from men.** *MacKnight* sees in this Paul showing that none but the apostles had the authority to reveal the Good News in an infallible manner; and that the false teachers were impostors who had no truth to reveal. **Which God had already chosen.** This shows that "Christ on the cross" was God's Plan even before Creation!

8. None of the rulers. This points to the Jewish and Roman rulers who nailed Christ to the cross. They were completely ignorant of God's wisdom and plan. The stupidity of the philosophers in rejecting "Christ on the cross" was only surpassed by the stupidity of the politicians who nailed him there.

9. As the scripture says. Paul paraphrases *Isa. 64:4* Septuagint. This describes "Christ on the cross," that is, *God's secret wisdom*. No one ever expected God to act in history by sending the Eternal Logos in human form and having him die on the cross as the means of salvation! The TOTAL glory of God's act in Christ is still beyond human understanding!!!

what no man ever thought could happen, is the very thing God prepared for those who love him.”

¹⁰But it was to us that God made known his secret, by means of his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God's purposes. ¹¹As for a man, it is his own spirit within him that knows all about him; in the same way, only God's Spirit knows all about God. ¹²We have not received this world's spirit; we have received the Spirit sent by God, so that we may know all that God has given us.

¹³So then, we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, as we explain spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit. ¹⁴But the man who does not have the Spirit cannot receive the gifts that come from God's Spirit. He really does not understand them; they are nonsense to him, because their value can be judged only on a spiritual

—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are

10. **But it was to us.** That is, *to we who love him*. Those things which human talents could not discover, God made known by means of his Spirit (compare *John 14:26*). **The Spirit searches everything.** That is, the Spirit knows the deep, unrevealed things of God, and he made them known to the apostles, who in turn reveal them to us through their writings.

11. **It is his own spirit.** He uses this as an illustration: your own spirit knows things about you which no one else can know. **In the same way.** Nothing of God's Plan and secret knowledge is unknown to God's Spirit. And, only God's Spirit can make these things known to us.

12. **We have not received this world's spirit.** Paul contrasts *this world's spirit* (the demonic inspiration of the pagan prophets, such as *Acts 16:16*), with the Spirit sent by God. **So that we may know all.** Compare *Eph. 1:17-18*. **That God has given us.** This points directly to the historic gifts which God has already given to men in Christ.

13. **So then.** The apostles *passed on to mankind* all the Spirit made known to them. Paul has no esoteric secrets to be whispered only to a select circle. If only the spiritually mature understand, it is not because he limits the number who hear. **But in words taught by the Spirit.** *Evans* writes: "with spiritual phrase matching spiritual truth." **As we explain spiritual truths.** [The TEV follows Bengel, Ruckert, Hofmann, Stanley, Alford, Schmiedel, et. al., in translating this phrase as it does.] This best ties in with *verse 14*.

14. **But the man.** [PSUCHIKOS = unspiritual, non-spiritual, not possessing the Spirit of God.] Paul is saying that human nature at its very best, such as seen in the Greek philosophers, the highest aims and thoughts of natural life, still has no ability to evaluate, understand, and receive the gifts (*verse 10*) that come from God's Spirit. **Only on a spiritual basis.** The spirit must be stirred from its paralyzed condition, and born of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5 and note*), before we can evaluate God's wisdom as the Spirit makes it known to us. We thank God that the "A B C's of the gospel," which all can understand, are enough to produce faith in us and prepare us for spiritual knowledge! [*Faith*: see *James 2:19* and note.]

basis. ¹⁵The man who has the Spirit is able to judge the value of everything, but no one is able to judge him. ¹⁶As the scripture says,

"Who knows the mind of the Lord?
Who is able to give him advice?"

We, however, have the mind of Christ.

Servants of God

3 As a matter of fact, brothers, I could not talk to you as I talk to men who have the Spirit; I had to talk to you as men of this world, as children in the Christian faith. ²I had to feed you milk, not solid food, because you were not ready for it. And even now you are not ready for it, ³because you still live as men of this world. When there is jealousy among you, and you quarrel with one another, doesn't this prove that you are men of this world, living by this world's standards? "When one of you says, "I am with Paul," and another, "I am with Apollos"—aren't you acting like worldly men?"

spiritually discerned. The ¹⁵ spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

"For who has known the ¹⁶ mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ.

On Divisions in the Church

3 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you ² milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For ³ since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? ⁴

15. The man who has the Spirit. The Spirit is God's gift to each Christian (see notes on Acts 2:39; 5:32). The man who has the Spirit is not blinded and biased by his human nature; therefore he has the ability to clearly see the true value of everything. **But no one is able to judge him.** The spiritual man stands on a height from which he scans the world, but only God is higher than he! [This is an ideal, since it implies a perfect development of maturity (compare 1 Cor. 3:1).]

16. As the scripture says. Paul paraphrases *Isa. 40:13* Septuagint. He uses this to illustrate his statement in verse 14-15. The greatest of the Greek philosophers, who were the most intelligent of "unspiritual man," could not give advice to God. [MacKnight understands this to mean that they had no ability to teach anything to a spiritual man.] **Have the mind of Christ.** Christ lives and thinks in the ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ (those who have the Spirit)! See 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Cor. 13:3-5; John 15:1-8.

1. I could not talk to you. Compare 1 Cor. 2:6, 14. MacKnight says: "From what is said in this chapter it appears, that the false teacher had represented St. Paul either as ignorant or as unfaithful, because he had not fully instructed the Corinthians before his departure. The same teacher had also boasted concerning himself, that he had given them complete instructions." **As Children.** This was a severe blow to the pride of the Corinthians. They thought they "knew it all" already, but he tells them they were "children." After one is put right with God, he must co-operate with the Spirit (see 1 Thess. 5:19; Gal. 5:13-18; and see notes on "law" at the end of Rom. 3).

2. I had to feed you milk. "I had to give you the elementary teachings of Christ, not the more difficult doctrines we teach to the spiritually mature." **And even now.** They still are spiritually immature. The proof of this is the lives they live.

3. Because you still live. Their lives are no different from the unconverted. **Doesn't this prove?** They are jealous and quarrel like men of the world. Compare Gal. 5:19-21.

4. When one of you says. The competition between them that grew out of their "party spirit" was proof of their worldly motives.

⁵After all, who is Apollos? And who is Paul? We are simply God's servants, by whom you were led to believe. Each one of us does the work the Lord gave him to do: ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow. ⁷The one who plants and the one who waters really do not matter. It is God who matters, because he makes the plant grow. ⁸There is no difference between the man who plants and the man who waters; God will reward each one according to the work he has done. ⁹For we are partners working together for God, and you are God's field.

You are also God's building. ¹⁰Using the gift that God gave me, I did the work of an expert builder and laid the foundation, and another man is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. ¹¹For God has already placed Jesus Christ as the one and only founda-

What, after all, is Apollos? 5
And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos 6
watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who 7
makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded 8
according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow 9
workers; you are God's field, God's building.

By the grace God has 10
given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and others are building on it. But each one should be 11
careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus

5. **After all?** Neither Paul nor Apollos were "the Lord" in matters of religion. They were simply God's servants, working together to proclaim the Good News. The "party spirit" of the Corinthians contrasts sharply with the *unity* of Paul and Apollos. [*MacKnight* thinks the false teacher was taught and baptized by Peter, whom he honored instead of Paul (see note on *1 Cor. 1:12*); and that Paul here uses "Apollos" as a symbol of the false teacher.]

6. **I planted the seed.** "I planted you in God's field, Apollos (and others) watered you, by teaching you, but it was God who made you grow." [This shows there are two basic kinds of preachers: *planting* preachers and *watering* preachers.]

7. **Really do not matter.** The power and message come from God. The ones who proclaim it are only "common clay pots" (*2 Cor. 4:7*). **It is God who matters.** He is the only important one, because he acted in history to make it all possible, and he makes the plant grow.

8. **There is no difference.** That is, in rank or importance. The work of each is equally important, and both are God's servants. Neither one deserves any special honor. **God will reward each one.** Paul contrasts individual and community relationships. He forbids the man to either defy the community or to merge himself into it (and lose his individuality). Compare *1 Cor. 12:5-11; 15:10-11; Gal. 6:2-5; Rom. 14:7-10. According to the work. We are saved to *do* good works. Compare *Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-28.**

9. **For we are partners.** They are not *rivals*, as the Corinthians seemed to think. They are God's workers, carrying out God's mission. **God's field.** Compare *Matt. 13:3-30. God's building. God's temple is built of living stones (*1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:19-22*).*

10. **That God gave me.** God himself made Paul an apostle. **I did the work.** As an apostle, Paul laid *the foundation* everywhere he went. He did this by proclaiming the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free. **Another man.** Apollos and the other teachers *built on the foundation* which Paul laid. **Must be careful.** The false teacher was also building on *the foundation*.

11. **For God has already placed Jesus Christ.** By God's decree, Jesus Christ is *the foundation*, the **CORNERSTONE** (*Eph. 2:20*) upon which the whole spiritual temple is constructed.

tion, and no other foundation can be laid. ¹²Some will use gold, or silver, or precious stones in building on the foundation; others will use wood, or grass, or straw. ¹³And the quality of each man's work will be seen when the Day of Christ exposes it. For that Day's fire will reveal every man's work; the fire will test it and show its real quality. ¹⁴If what a man built on the foundation survives the fire, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵But if any man's work is burnt up, then he will lose it; but he himself will be saved, as if he had escaped through the fire.

¹⁶Surely you know that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit lives in you! ¹⁷So if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you yourselves are his temple.

Christ. If any man builds on ¹² this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will ¹³ be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, ¹⁴ he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer ¹⁵ loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Don't you know that you ¹⁶ yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys ¹⁷ God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

12. Some will use. Christ's church is not built of doctrines, but people. *MacKnight* says the building materials represent disciples of Christ. *Gold, silver, precious stones* symbolize sincere believers. *Wood, grass, straw* symbolize those who have been taught false things.

13. And the quality. The real proof of each man's work will be clearly demonstrated by the fire of persecution. **The Day of Christ.** *MacKnight* sees this as the severe persecution which would shortly come. Compare *Luke 21:22*. **For that Day's fire.** *MacKnight* says: "That the fire of which the apostle speaks is the fire of persecution, I think evident from *1 Pet. 4:12* . . ." The false teacher had built into the church some who were still wicked, such as the man guilty of incest, others who said the dead would not be raised, etc. Such would *go back to the world* when tested by persecution (unless they repented, as the man guilty of incest did).

14. Survives the fire. [Some, misunderstanding and thinking the Day of Christ to mean the Judgment, have taught that both the righteous and wicked will be burned in the fires of hell (purgatory); the wicked burnt up, and the righteous made pure.] If the disciples he has taught are faithful when persecuted, he will receive the reward mentioned in *Dan. 12:3*. See also notes on *Matt. 20:13-15*.

15. Is burnt up. If the disciples he has taught are unfaithful when persecuted, he will lose his reward (see *verse 14*). **But he himself will be saved.** This seems to imply the false teacher was sincere in his efforts, even though he was not properly preparing the disciples which he taught. **Escaped through the fire.** As a man who runs out of a burning house, losing everything but his own life.

16. You are God's temple. You = the church of God in Corinth. **God's Spirit lives in you.** See *Eph. 2:22*.

17. So if anyone destroys. Here Paul speaks of those who purposely distort the truth of God (*Gal. 1:6-9*), but also of those who destroy the messianic community by their "party spirit" (see *verses 3-4*). Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5*.

¹⁸No one should fool himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is a wise man by this world's standards, he should become a fool, in order to be really wise. ¹⁹For what this world considers to be wisdom is nonsense in God's sight. As the scripture says, "God traps the wise men in their cleverness"; ²⁰and another scripture says, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are worthless." ²¹No one, then, should boast about what men can do. Actually everything belongs to you: ²²Paul, Apollos, and Peter; this world, life, and death, the present and the future; all of these are yours, ²³and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Do not deceive yourselves. 18
If any one of you thinks he is
wise by the standards of this
age, he should become a
"fool" so that he may be-
come wise. For the wisdom 19
of this world is foolishness in
God's sight. As it is written:
"He catches the wise in their
craftiness"; and again, 20
"The Lord knows that the
thoughts of the wise are
futile." So then no more 21
boasting about men! All
things are yours, whether 22
Paul or Apollos or Cephas or
the world or life or death or
the present or the future—
all are yours, and you are of 23
Christ and Christ is of God.

Apostles of Christ

4 You should look on us as Christ's servants who have been put in charge of God's secret

Apostles of Christ

4 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those en-

18. No one should fool himself. The false teacher at Corinth thought himself to be *wise* because he was able to get people to come to Christ through not telling them all the teachings of Christ, and misrepresenting some things. But as poor as this false teacher's work might be, he did build on *the foundation* (verses 14-15). But what he was doing was especially dangerous to him personally, because those who follow men's wisdom may turn away from God. Read the warning in *Heb. 6:4-6*. **He should become a fool.** By preaching "*Christ on the cross*" and all the other things that make up the Good News. See note on *1 Cor. 1:23*.

19. For what this world. See *1 Cor. 1:20* and note. **As the scripture says.** Paul paraphrases *Job 5:13* Septuagint. God lets men outsmart themselves! Compare *1 Cor. 2:6*.

20. And another scripture says. Paul paraphrases *Psalms 94:11* Septuagint. "Man schemes, and God laughs."

21. About what men can do. Since Paul, Apollos, and Peter are all God's servants, no one should boast about being followers of one specific teacher. But especially, they had no reason to boast about the false teacher who brought "wicked men" into the church (verse 18 and note). **Actually everything belongs to you.** From here through verse 23, Paul shows the *reason* why no one should boast about what men can do. By God's decree, all things good and bad, present and future, belong to his people in the sense of helping them grow in this life, and making them happy in the next!

22. Paul, Apollos, and Peter. See verse 5. **This world is the servant of God's people** (*1 Cor. 6:12*). **Life and death.** Our time on earth, and even death, becomes our servant in Christ. **The present and the future** stretches it out over all possible times. **All of these.** Paul jubilantly repeats the thought that the totality of Creation is our blessing in Christ!!! See *Rom. 8:28*.

23. And you belong to Christ. This is the climax! In Christ they have union with God!!! How foolish, then, the jealousy and quarrels of rival parties. This also is a statement of irony. "Lords of Creation, you are His slaves. All Creation does belong to you, but you are slaves of the true owner, the God of heaven." No boasting here, because we are caretakers of God's riches!

1. As Christ's servants. Paul goes back to the question of how much honor should be given to Christian teachers. Because of the almost divine honors which Greeks gave to the philosophers who were their leaders, Paul must tell them strongly that the apostles are only servants, not rulers. "Just

truths. ²The one thing required of the man in charge is that he be faithful to his master. ³Now, I am not at all concerned about being judged by you, or by any human standard; I don't even pass judgment on myself. ⁴My conscience is clear, but that does not prove that I am really innocent. The Lord is the one who passes judgment on me. ⁵So you should not pass judgment on anyone before the right time comes. Final judgment must wait until the Lord comes; he will bring to light the dark secrets and expose the hidden purposes of men's hearts. And then every man will receive from God the praise he deserves.

⁶For your sake, brothers, I have applied all this to Apollos and me. I have used us as an example, so that you may learn what the saying means, "Observe the proper rules." None of you

trusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At the time each will receive his praise from God.

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written."

clerks watching the store while the boss is away." But when he tells them this, he does not want them to misunderstand and think that Christ had not given them authority. **Who have been put in charge.** To understand this properly, you must know that in the ancient world, a man of wealth would have a *family* which included his servants and /or slaves as well as his children, and that he would appoint one servant to be in charge of and be responsible for the business affairs of the *family*. The servant would be given his instructions, which he would then carry out. Using this symbolism, Paul and the other apostles are *put in charge* (by Christ) of God's secret truths (the Good News, see *1 Cor. 2:7-10*), to give these to the members of the *family*.

2. **Is that he be faithful.** Paul was faithful in giving out God's secret truths, and he did this on the basis of their ability to understand (*1 Cor. 3:1; Heb. 5:11-14*). God's servant must be faithful (*James 3:1*). The false teacher accused Paul of being unfaithful, because after teaching the first principles, he did not immediately give them all the deep truths of God.

3. **About being judged by you.** It is God who will decide who has been faithful, not the Corinthians or any human being. **On myself.** That is, he himself has no right to set up a standard by which to pass judgment on himself. Only God has that right! [However, Paul does intend us to measure ourselves by God's standard (*1 Cor. 11:31; 2 Cor. 13:5*).]

4. **My conscience is clear.** He has no reason to feel unfaithful in what he has done at Corinth. But that **does not prove.** His self-approval is not proof. **The Lord.** Only He has the right to judge! See *Rom. 14:4*.

5. **So you.** This statement is not to be applied in general to everything, since neither church nor state could maintain order and peace, if rulers did not pass judgment on the disobedient. Two things stand out here: (1) The Corinthians were not to pass judgment on Paul's work as an apostle, until Jesus comes and judges him. (2) We have no right to pass judgment on the eternal destiny of anyone (*Rom. 14:10*), although it is our obligation to take Jesus to our fellow man (*Matt. 28:19-20*). **And then every man.** "The Lord of all will do right!" The motives of each man's life will be clearly seen!

6. **For your sake, brothers.** To teach the lesson of humility, and to show how much honor ought to be given to a teacher, Paul used himself and Apollos as examples (see note on *1 Cor. 3:5*). **Observe the proper rules** = Do not go beyond what is written. Paul gives the proper rules in *1 Cor. 3:5-9; 4:1*. "I

should be proud of one man and despise the other. ⁷Who made you superior to the others? Didn't God give you everything you have? Well, then, how can you brag, as if what you have were not a gift?

⁸Already you have everything you need! Already you are rich! you have become kings, even though we are not! Well, I wish you really were kings, so that we could be kings together with you. ⁹For it seems to me that God has given us apostles the very last place, like men condemned to die in public, as a spectacle for the whole world of angels and of men. ¹⁰For Christ's sake we are fools; but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! We are despised, but you are honored! ¹¹To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty; we are clothed in rags; we are beaten; we wander from place to place;

Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 7

Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings—and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, 8 9 10 11

have used Apollos and myself as examples, in my warning you against division, (I do not mention the names of those causing this division), that in our example you might learn to avoid the rivalry and jealousy of forming parties." **None of you.** He warns them against being proud of one teacher and trying to destroy another.

7. **Who made you superior to the others?** *MacKnight* understands Paul to be speaking to the false teacher. "What gift do you have that wasn't given to you by God through we apostles? How, then, can you brag that you are superior to us?"

8. **Already you have everything!** Paul speaks in *irony!* "Your followers have made you rich with their gifts to you. You have ruled as a *king*, and despise us. I would be happy if you were real kings and priests with Christ." **So that we could be kings together.** So that together with the apostles, they could bring honor to Christ, and receive from Christ the honor which He gives to his servants.

9. **The very last place.** Paul's experiences at Ephesus (*1 Cor. 15:32*) probably make him think of this. See also *2 Cor. 2:14*. Paul is showing the Corinthians the contrast between the false teacher and the apostles. The false teacher had riches (*verse 8*), while the true apostles suffered (*John 16:33*). Gladiators fought and died in the hot sun, while the crowds sat in their comfortable seats and watched. Condemned men fought naked, and any who escaped only faced death another day. **As a spectacle.** Compare *Eph. 3:10-11; Luke 15:10; Psalm 90:8; Heb. 12:1*. Both men and angels were amazed to see how the apostles suffered.

10. **For Christ's sake.** What the apostles did, can only be explained by their *LOVE* for Christ! Paul speaks in *irony*, as he repeats what his enemies at Corinth were saying about him. In the same spirit of *irony*, he *honors* them. If the apostles are *fools*, the Corinthians are *wise*; if the apostles are *weak*, and *despised*, the Corinthians are *strong* and *honored*.

11. **To this very hour.** Compare what Paul says in these verses with *Heb. 11:32-40*. He tells more about his suffering in *2 Cor. 6:3-10*.

¹²we work hard to support ourselves. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; ¹³when we are insulted, we answer back with kind words. We are no more than this world's garbage; we are the scum of the earth to this very hour!

¹⁴I write this to you, not because I want to make you feel ashamed; I do it to instruct you as my own dear children. ¹⁵For even if you have ten thousand guardians in your life in Christ, you have only one father. For in your life in Christ Jesus I have become your father, by bringing the Good News to you. ¹⁶I beg you, then, follow my example. ¹⁷For this purpose I am sending Timothy to you. He is my own dear and faithful son in the Lord. He will remind you of the principles which I follow in the new life in Christ Jesus, and which I teach in all the churches everywhere.

¹⁸Some of you have become proud, thinking

we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not

12. **We work hard.** See note on *1 Cor. 9:6*.

13. **When we are insulted.** Paul always returned good for bad, as Jesus said to do (*Matt. 5:44*; compare *Rom. 12:17-21*). **Garbage . . . scum.** Paul is still using the symbolism of "men condemned to die in public" (*verse 9*). It was the custom in Athens to offer a human sacrifice in times of crisis. Certain "worthless persons" were seized and thrown into the sea, in the belief that this would remove the guilt which caused the "gods" to curse the nation. Paul is saying that the world sees the apostles as men only fit to be sacrificed to the anger of the "gods."

14. **I write this to you.** Paul says he has not made this contrast between himself and the false teacher just to make them ashamed. Rather, he writes as a father to his own dear children, to instruct them in the truth.

15. **You have only one father.** PAIDAGOGOS = guardian, one who took care of a child from the time it was a baby, feeding, clothing, and teaching it, and taking it to and from school when it is that age. Paul is gently scolding them (compare *Gal. 3:25*). **I have become your father.** The teachers of the Law said: "Whoever teaches the Law to the son of his friend, it is as if he has become his father."

16. **Follow my example.** Children imitate their parents. They should imitate their spiritual father, by humility and unselfishness.

17. **For this purpose.** Timothy was Paul's "son in the Lord" (*Acts 16:1-3*). Probably he was already on the way to Corinth (*1 Cor. 16:10*), but this letter would arrive first. **Of the principles which I follow.** Paul's new life in Christ Jesus was based upon the things taught in the Good News. Paul changed neither his teachings nor his life to please wicked men. He taught the same gospel everywhere he went!!!

18. **Some of you.** There were some at Corinth (in the church) who were hostile to Paul. He warns them not to see any weakness in the fact that he sends Timothy to them.

that I would not be coming to visit you. ¹⁹If the Lord is willing, however, I will come to you soon, and then I will find out for myself what these proud ones can do, and not just what they can say. ²⁰For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of words, but of power. ²¹Which do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or with a heart of love and gentleness?

Immorality in the Church

5 Now it is actually being said that there is sexual immorality among you so terrible that not even the heathen would be guilty of it. I am told that a man is living with his stepmother! ²How, then, can you be proud? On the contrary, you should be filled with sadness, and the man who has done such a thing should be put out of your group. ³As for me, even though I am far away from you in body, still I am there with you in spirit; and in the name of our Lord Jesus I have already passed judgment on the man who has done this terrible thing. As though I were

coming to you. But I will ¹⁹ come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of ²⁰ God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you ²¹ prefer? Shall I come to you with punishment, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

Expel the Immoral Brother!

5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And ² you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though ³ I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present.

19. **If the Lord is willing.** We all should say this! Compare *James 4:13-17*. I will come to you soon. Compare *1 Cor. 16:7-8*. Paul intends to come in person and to punish those who will not turn away from their sin [repent].

20. **For the Kingdom of God.** Note the identity of church and Kingdom (compare *Matt. 16:18*). **But of power.** As an apostle, Paul had the miraculous gifts from the Spirit, which included the power to punish.

21. **Which do you prefer?** He is speaking to the false teacher and the group which follows him. The choice is theirs!!!

1. **That there is sexual immorality.** Immorality [fornication] was the *normal* way of life among the Gentiles. The temple of Venus at Corinth had 1,000 prostitutes who served as "priestesses" in worship which we would describe as a sex-orgy. Immorality was always a serious problem in the church, because of the need to live a holy life. See notes on *Rev. 2:6,20*. **That not even the heathen.** Even the Gentiles who permitted almost anything, would not allow this to happen! *MacKnight* thinks this man was living with his stepmother in the incestuous relationship during the lifetime of his father.

2. **How then, can you be proud?** This implies the false teacher influenced them to permit this to continue. See note on *1 Cor. 3:13*; and compare *Rom. 6:1-2*. **You should be filled with sadness.** Compare *2 Cor. 7:10*. **Put out of your group.** To remove this source of *bad influence* from the group. The woman is not mentioned. She likely was not a believer, therefore not subject to their discipline.

3. **Even though I am far away.** Distance separated them, yet he was there with them in *spirit* through his interest in them and his knowledge of their actions. **I have already passed judgment.** As an apostle, he could do this. The man, however, had already *judged* himself by his sin.

there with you. ⁴As you meet together, and I meet with you in my spirit, by the power of our Lord Jesus present with us, ⁵you are to hand this man over to Satan for his body to be destroyed, so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.

⁶It is not right for you to be proud! You know the saying, "A little bit of yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise." ⁷You must take out this old yeast of sin so that you will be entirely pure. Then you will be like a new batch of dough without any yeast, as indeed I know you actually are. For our Passover feast is ready, now that Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸Let us celebrate our feast, then, not with bread having the old yeast, the yeast of sin and wickedness, but with the bread that has no yeast, the bread of purity and truth.

⁹In the letter that I wrote you I told you not to

When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that his sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. 4
5

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. 6
7
8

I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 9

4. **As you meet together.** This was to be a solemn act of the whole community of believers. Compare *Matt. 18:15-17*. And I meet with you. Paul, by his authority, had commanded what they were about to do. **Of our Lord Jesus.** Christ, as the head of the church, is the source of authority.

5. **Over to Satan.** This means to expell him from the messianic community. **For his body to be destroyed.** The shame of being put out of the church would cause the man to repent. His pride would be destroyed. *MacKnight* thinks the language implies a painful physical disease was part of the judgment which Paul placed on the man. *Johnson* argues that when Paul tells them to take the man back into the church (*2 Cor. 2:7*), nothing is said about any physical disease. But *1 Cor. 4:21*; *2 Cor. 13:1,2,10* are good reasons to adopt *MacKnight's* thinking. **So that his spirit.** This is the reason for discipline in the church. Compare *Jude 22-23*; *2 Cor. 2:5-11*.

6. **It is not right.** They were proud of their (false) teacher, and though he understood the gospel better than Paul; and were (perhaps) proud of the way this man defended the incestuous relationship. **You know the saying.** This man's example would poison the whole community of believers.

7. **You must take out.** The church as a group must act to remove this source of "bad example." **A new batch of dough.** Paul uses the "unleavened bread" of Passover as a symbol of *purity*. During Passover week, Jews got rid of every trace of yeast from their houses, so that the Passover bread would be completely without leaven. **Our Passover lamb.** The Jewish day began at 6 P.M. (see note on *Acts 20:7*). In Jewish practice, all the yeast would have been carefully removed before the Passover lamb was killed. Paul is saying: "Our Passover lamb is already killed, but you have not removed the leaven (yeast) of sin from your lives. This is a contradiction!" Three symbolic realities were in each Passover: (1) *the blood* of the lamb (compare *Matt. 26:28*); (2) *the flesh* of the lamb (compare *Heb. 10:20*); (3) *the continued feast*, an act of fellowship (compare *1 Cor. 10:16-22*).

8. **Let us celebrate our feast.** The Greek implies *continuous action*. Paul's intention is to show the Corinthians (and us) that the Christian's "Passover feast" includes the whole Christian conduct of life! **The yeast of sin and wickedness.** It is always our obligation to take out the old yeast. In being sacrificed *once and for all*, we ALWAYS see "Christ on the cross" (see note on *1 Cor. 1:23*).

9. **In the letter.** He had written a short letter, which we do not have. **Not to associate with immoral people.** The Corinthians thought he meant the people of the world only, and they did associate with the man in *verse 1*.

associate with immoral people. ¹⁰Now, I did not mean pagans who are immoral, or greedy, or thieves, or who worship idols. To avoid them you would have to get out of the world completely.

¹¹What I meant was that you should not associate with a man who calls himself a brother but is immoral, or greedy, or worships idols, or is a slanderer, or a drunkard, or a thief. Don't even sit down to eat with such a person.

¹²⁻¹³After all, it is none of my business to judge outsiders. God will judge them. But should you not judge the members of your own fellowship? As the scripture says, "Take the evil man out of your group."

Lawsuits against Brothers

6 If one of you has a dispute with a brother, how dare he go before heathen judges, instead of letting God's people settle the matter? ²Don't you know that God's people will judge the world? Well, then, if you are to judge the world,

not at all meaning the 10 people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I 11 am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

What business is it of 12 mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will 13 judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from your number."

Lawsuits Among Believers

6 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not 2 know that God's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are

10. **Now I did mean pagans.** "I say this plainly, so that you cannot misunderstand me." It would be impossible to make a living at Corinth (or any other place) without daily contact with such sinners. Yet see Paul's warning in *2 Cor. 6:14*. **To avoid them.** "To get out of the world" would not agree with what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:14-16*. Christians cannot take Christ to people they will not talk with!

11. **What I meant.** This points directly at the man in *verse 1*, and the false teacher. This man called himself a *brother*. To associate with him is to show approval of his sins. Business transactions are not a sign of friendliness, but eating together is! [This implies the false teacher was saying it was all right for a Christian to be immoral, greedy, and worship idols. See notes on *1 Cor. 3:18; 10:14-17*.]

12-13. **To judge outsiders.** It is none of Paul's business, or ours, to judge those outside the messianic community. They are in the hands of God. **Of your own fellowship.** The church is a voluntary group, and its discipline is for those who are part of the group. **Take the evil man out of your group.** Paul paraphrases *Deut. 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7*. This is his decree of punishment on the incestuous man. Compare note on *verse 2*.

1. **How dare he.** It was the custom at Corinth to sue each other in the heathen courts of justice over wordly matters, often over unimportant things. After becoming Christians, they had continued to do this. This showed a lack of trust in the church-leaders, and gave the heathen reason to think that the Christians were hostile to each other. [Paul himself did not hesitate to use his Roman citizenship and appeal his case to Roman justice. Yet he did not do this in matters between brother and brother, nor to accuse his persecutors (*Acts 28:19*), only for his defence.]

2. **Don't you know?** This question is repeated six times in this chapter, which implies Paul is scolding them because of their ignorance, when they boast that the false teacher has given them wisdom. **That God's people will judge the world.** This can mean: (1) That Christians actually judge the world by

aren't you capable of judging small matters? ³Do you not know that we shall judge the angels? How much more, then, the things of this life! ⁴If, then, such matters come up, are you going to take them to be settled by people who have no standing in the church? ⁵Shame on you! Surely there is at least one wise man in your fellowship who can settle a dispute between the brothers. ⁶Instead, one brother goes to court against another, and lets unbelievers judge the case! ⁷The very fact that you have legal disputes among yourselves shows that you have failed completely. Would it not be better for you to be wronged? Would it not be better for you to be robbed? ⁸Instead, you yourselves wrong one another, and rob one another, even your very

you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers!

The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.

preaching the Good News of Christ (see note on *Matt. 19:28*); (2) That Christians judge the world by their *faith* (compare *Luke 11:31*; *John 3:18-20*; *Rom. 8:3*); (3) That Christians will sit with Christ, after they have been judged, as He judges the world (compare *Matt. 25:34, 41*). [Johnson favors #3.]

3. **We shall judge the angels?** *Godet* writes: "Paul does not wish to mark out this or that class of angels, but to awaken in the Church the sense of its competence and dignity by reminding it that beings of this lofty nature will one day be subject to its jurisdiction." [*MacKnight* thinks it speaks about Christians foretelling the judgment and punishment of bad angels.]

4. **Who have no standing in the church?** [The Greek of this verse can be translated three ways. The TEV follows Meyer, Heinrich, W & H, Tisch., et. al. The NIV follows the Vulgate, Beza, KJV, et. al. *Whitby* translates it: "If ye use the heathen secular judgment-seats, ye constitute those who are despised in the church your judges."] See *1 Cor. 2:15* and note. Paul writes with some degree of anger. They, who are spiritual men, bring shame to themselves and to the church, when they go to unspiritual men to settle these matters.

5. **At least one wise man.** "With all your boasting about wisdom, you ought to be able to find one wise man!"

6. **Instead.** "Your action shows there is no wise man in the Church at Corinth, or he would surely have been called upon to settle the matter." See note on *verse 1*.

7. **Shows that you have failed completely.** The lawsuits were only symptoms of something far more serious. There was unchristian resentment; but even more, there was antisocial behavior on the part of the aggressors (*verses 9-10*). **Would it not be better?** It would be better to be wronged or robbed, rather than to bring shame and division into the church. The rule is: (1) better to be wronged than to go to law in the civil courts; (2) if a settlement is required, get a wise man in the church to make it. See what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:38-42*.

8. **Even your very brothers.** We are ONE in Christ. This makes it even more sinful when we destroy each other!

brothers! ⁹Surely you know that the wicked will not receive God's Kingdom. Do not fool yourselves; people who are immoral, or worship idols, or are adulterers, or homosexual perverts, ¹⁰or who rob, or are greedy, or are drunkards, or who slander others, or are thieves—none of these will receive God's Kingdom. ¹¹Some of you were like that. But you have been cleansed from sin; you have been dedicated to God; you have been put right with God through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Use Your Bodies for God's Glory

¹²Someone will say, "I am allowed to do anything." Yes; but not everything is good for you. I could say, "I am allowed to do anything"; but I am not going to let anything make a slave of

9
wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of 10
you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Sexual Immorality

12
"Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered

9. **Will not receive God's Kingdom.** The church is God's Kingdom on earth, and all who die in Christ will receive the Eternal Kingdom! **Do not fool yourselves.** No unholy person will receive the Eternal Kingdom. But see *verse 11*. **Immoral.** See note on *Matt. 19:9*. **Worship idols.** See note on *1 Thess. 1:9*. **Adulterers.** See *verse 16*. **Homosexual perverts.** The Greek specifies both passive and active roles in this.

10. **Who rob.** Who break in and steal. **Greedy.** Covetous persons. **Drunkards.** The Bible severely condemns drunkenness. **Slander.** Compare *Matt. 5:22* and note. **Thieves.** Extortioners, blackmailers. **None of these.** To gain the favor of the Greeks, the false teacher had taught that opulence and immorality were permitted by the gospel; and he had used all the standard arguments to justify his claim. Paul makes it plain that this is not true!

11. **Some of you were like that.** This shows the amazing power of the gospel! Faith in "Christ on the cross" leads bad people to become transformed! See *1 Pet. 4:3-5*. **Cleansed from sin.** Literally: "But you washed yourselves!" This certainly points to baptism (see *Acts 22:16; Titus 3:4-5; Heb 10:22; Eph. 5:26*). **Dedicated.** The TEV does not use "sanctification, sanctify, or saint," because the average person understands these words in an unbiblical way. "Sanctification: the work of the Holy Spirit by which the believer is 1) *set free from sin*; 2) *exalted to holiness of life*." This dictionary definition is accurate, if you recognize: 1) Christ's finished work for us - made clean by His bloody-death and dedicated to God; 2) the Holy Spirit's work in us, as we co-operate with Him to become progressively holy (*1 Pet. 1:2, 16, 22, 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13*). "Sanctification is the believer-taking Justification seriously! Sanctification is Justification translated into action." *To be holy is to take being put right with God seriously!* **Put right with God.** The bloody-death of Christ was to change sinners! We reach out through faith to seize His sacrifice, to be put right with God by His imputed righteousness. See *Acts 22:16* and note. **Through the name.** See *Acts 4:12*. **And by the Spirit.** We are buried with Christ in the liquid grave so our sins will be forgiven, and to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. See notes on *Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 12:13*.

12. **I am allowed to do anything.** Paul taught that a Christian was free from human rules that said: "Don't handle this, Don't taste that, Don't touch the other" (*Col. 2:21*). Some thought this gave them the right to live in opulence and sensuality as the Epicureans taught. Paul says: "Yes, you are free, but not everything is good for you. You must not let anything make you its slave." "I am allowed to do anything" must have been a slogan used by the Corinthian Christians, since Paul uses it twice here, and twice again in *1 Cor. 10:23*.

me. ¹³Someone else will say, "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food." Yes; but God will put an end to both. A man's body is not to be used for immoral purposes, but to serve the Lord; and the Lord serves the body. ¹⁴God raised the Lord from death, and he will also raise us by his power.

¹⁵You know that your bodies are parts of the body of Christ. Shall I take a part of Christ's body and make it part of the body of a prostitute? Impossible! ¹⁶Or perhaps you don't know that the man who joins his body to a prostitute becomes physically one with her? The scripture says quite plainly, "The two will become one body." ¹⁷But he who joins himself to the Lord becomes spiritually one with him.

¹⁸Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who commits immorality sins against his own body. ¹⁹Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you, and was given to you by God? You do not belong

by anything. "Food for the 13 stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his 14 power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not 15 know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that 16 he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself 17 with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

Flee from sexual im- 18 morality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually 19 sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your

13. **Food is for the stomach.** Paul follows what Jesus said in *Mark 7:15-23*. Food is neutral, neither good nor bad. But neither food nor stomach are eternal matters. A **man's body**. Greek thought viewed man as "a soul imprisoned in a body of flesh;" the soul valuable, the flesh worthless. Jewish thought saw man as a *unity* - all parts equally valuable. Compare Paul's statement in *1 Thess. 5:23*. Paul makes it plain here that a man's body is to be used to serve the Lord. **And the Lord serves the body.** By raising it from death and changing it! Compare *Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:35-57; 1 John 3:1-3*.

14. **And he will also raise us.** "Raising our bodies from death" is an integral part of the Good News (*Acts 17:18, 31-32*). Our bodies are too important to throw away in sensuality!

15. **You know.** Current religious thought says man is only valuable because he has a *soul*. Paul says the Christian's body is part of the body of Christ. See *verse 19*. **The body of a prostitute?** This would defile the holy!

16. **The two will become one body.** Paul quotes *Gen. 2:24* to prove that the man and the prostitute become physically one in the sex act. [This does not mean that the man and the prostitute are now married to each other.] Jewish thought did not see a marriage as solemnized until the physical union took place. God himself blessed marriage, but union with a prostitute is a perversion.

17. **But he.** Paul uses the marriage relationship (the physical union) to symbolize the spiritual union to Christ. Compare *Eph. 5:25-33; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:27*.

18. **Avoid immorality.** Idolatry and immorality go along together. They are to be avoided (*1 Cor. 10:14*). **Sins against his own body.** This sin defiles his body, because in it he becomes physically one with the other person.

19. **Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.** Every Christian is a "Spirit-filled Christian" (*Acts 2:38; 5:32; Eph. 2:22; John 7:38-39*). **But to God.** When you became a Christian, you gave yourself to God. You no longer have the right to use your body to serve sin.

to yourselves but to God; ²⁰he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory.

Questions about Marriage

7 Now, to deal with the matters you wrote about. A man does well not to marry. ²But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. ³A man should fulfill his duty as a husband and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs. ⁴The wife is not the master of her own body, but the husband is; in the same way the husband is not the master of his own body, but the wife is. ⁵Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while, in order to spend your time in prayer; but then resume normal marital relations, to keep you from giving in to Satan's temptation because of your lack of self-control.

own; you were bought at a ²⁰ price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Marriage

7 Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good ² for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. ⁵ Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your

20. He bought you. *John 3:16.* The Cross stands as God's estimate of YOUR value!!! **So use your bodies for God's glory.** By holy living and good actions. Compare *Matt. 25:31-40.*

1. You wrote about. In the first six chapters, Paul with specific problems of sin in the group. Now he begins to answer questions which they had written to him. To understand this chapter, you must know that Jewish thought believed marriage to be an obligation, and saw celibacy as a *sin against God.* The false teacher, being a Jew, would be expected to teach this. Some of the Greek philosophers, however, thought of marriage as "legalized lust," and taught that the only holy life was celibacy. Remember that Paul is here answering specific questions, and that he qualifies all that he says in *verse 26.* **A man does well not to marry.** Note: Paul does not denounce marriage. What he is doing is to defend celibacy as an option. But he points out that this is a *gift* in *verse 7.*

2. But because. Unless you have the special *gift from God,* celibacy exposes you to unnecessary temptation, especially if you live in Corinth. Remember: God himself is the *author* of marriage. "And God the Eternal said: It is not good, that the man is alone; I will create to him a companion-counterpart to him." [*Gen. 2:18 Zamenhof.*]

3. And each should satisfy the other's needs. God's original marriage-law (see note on *verse 2*) shows that by His decree, husband and wife are to satisfy each other's physical and emotional needs. No Jewish High Priest would ever have imagined the sexual union in marriage to be an unholy thing! This shows how much Greek thought has influenced Christianity down through the centuries.

4. But the husband is. He is the *master* of her body; she is the *master* of his body! This not only forbids adultery, but removes the "need" for it.

5. Do not deny yourselves. "If you believe you should suspend normal marital relations to be able to spend more time in prayer, that is permissible. But make it a short time, and then resume normal relations. Don't expose yourself to unnecessary temptation from the Devil."

⁶I tell you this not as an order, but simply as a permission. ⁷Actually I would prefer that all were as I am; but each one has the special gift that God has given him, one man this gift, another man that.

⁸Now, I say this to the unmarried and to the widows: it would be better for you to continue to live alone, as I do. ⁹But if you cannot restrain your desires, go on and marry—it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

¹⁰For married people I have a command, not my own but the Lord's: a wife must not leave her husband; ¹¹if she does, she must remain single or else be reconciled to her husband; and a husband must not divorce his wife.

¹²To the others I say (I, myself, not the Lord): if a Christian man has a wife who is an unbeliever and she agrees to go on living with him,

lack of self-control. I say ⁶ this as a concession, not as a ⁷ command. I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

Now to the unmarried and ⁸ the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, ⁹ as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

To the married I give this ¹⁰ command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹ But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

To the rest I say this (I, ¹² not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not

6. **Not as an order.** This may mean: (1) what he just said in *verse 5 (Johnson)*; (2) what he said in *verse 2 (Exp. Grk. Test.)*; (3) what he now says in *verse 7 (MacKnight)*.

7. **Actually I would prefer.** There is strong evidence that Paul had at one time been married. Many think he is a widower as he writes this, that he never remarried, and that he is living a celibate life. **The special gift.** There are many different talents and gifts in the messianic community. Paul was unique (*1 Cor. 9:5*).

8. **Now, I say this.** He restates his answer of *verses 1-2*. Considering the present distress (*verse 26*), it would be better for the unmarried and the widows to live alone. Celibacy is a moral option.

9. **But if you cannot restrain.** Celibacy is not an option for everyone. Compare *Matt. 19:11-12* and notes. **It is better to marry.** The unsatisfied desire is a constant source of temptation, and by the rule of *verse 35*, it is better to marry than to burn with passion; however, when marriage is impossible, it is infinitely better to burn, than to *sin!*

10. **I have a command.** "From what I have said about preferring all to be unmarried, you must not misunderstand and think it would be best to abandon your marriage partner. The Lord commands that you not do this."

11. **If she does.** Note Paul's emphasis on the woman leaving the man. Christianity had strongly affected the feminine mind (*1 Cor. 11:5-7; 14:34-35*). *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "In some cases, not so much incompatibility as ascetic aversion [pseudo-spirituality] (compare *verses 3-4*) caused the wish to separate." An Asian church-leader forged a letter, in which he claimed Paul taught: "*There can be no future resurrection, unless ye continue in chastity, and do not defile your flesh.*" **She must remain single.** The Lord's command is: "a wife must not leave her husband." If she does it anyhow, she must either remain single or else be reconciled to her husband. This is because the marriage is not broken by her leaving. [For two exceptions to this, see *Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15*.]

12-13. **To the others I say.** The Lord gave no commands about mixed marriages, yet remember Paul speaks by inspiration. **Who is an unbeliever.** Often only one of a couple is converted to Christ. It may be the false teacher taught that such a mixed marriage was unholy, and that the Christian ought to

he must not divorce her. ¹³And if a Christian woman is married to a man who is an unbeliever, and he agrees to go on living with her, she must not divorce him. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is made acceptable to God by being united to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made acceptable to God by being united to her Christian husband. If this were not so, their children would be like pagan children; but as it is, they are acceptable to God. ¹⁵However, if the one who is not a believer wishes to leave the Christian partner, let it be so. In such cases the Christian partner, whether husband or wife, is free to act. God has called you to live in peace. ¹⁶How can you be sure, Christian wife, that you will not save your husband? Or how can you be sure, Christian husband, that you will not save your wife?

Live as God Called You

¹⁷Each one should go on living according to the Lord's gift to him, and as he was when God called him. This is the rule I teach in all the

divorce her. And if a woman ¹³ has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be "unclean," but as it is, they are holy.

But if the unbeliever ¹⁵ leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Nevertheless, each one ¹⁷ should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

escape from such a union. But Paul by inspiration teaches that this difference in religion neither makes the marriage unholy (*verse 14*), nor gives any right to break it (except as he says in *verse 15*).

14. Is made acceptable. MacKnight says this should be understood in a Jewish sense - things clean and unclean (as *Acts 10:14-15*). Paul is not talking about salvation here. Remember the false teacher at Corinth was a Jew. Paul says the marriage is *clean* and the children of such a marriage are *clean*.

15. However. This is the "Pauline privilege." Note that it only covers the specific condition of an *unbeliever* deserting the Christian partner. There was and is much controversy about Christianity (compare *Matt. 10:34-36*), and sometimes the unbelieving partner is so fanatically opposed to Christianity that he or she refuses to continue the marriage. **Is free to act.** The Christian partner **ABANDONED** by the unbeliever is free from the former relationship. The marriage has terminated. **To live in peace.** Being set free in this way is not the best thing. The Christian partner is to do their best to live in peace with the unbelieving partner.

16. How can you be sure? Be kind, gentle, loving, and you may bring your unbelieving wife or husband to Christ. Compare *1 Pet. 3:1-2*.

17. Each one should go on. The false teacher at Corinth (who was probably one of the Circumcision Party) taught that when you became a Christian, all former moral and political obligations vanished. This caused some wives to abandon their marriages (*verse 10-11*), and some men to quit their jobs and beg the church to support them (*1 Thess. 4:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-15*). Paul says that every Christian should fulfill all the moral and political obligations which he had before becoming a Christian, unless he can change his condition lawfully.

churches. ¹⁸If a circumcised man has accepted God's call, he should not try to remove the marks of circumcision; if an uncircumcised man has accepted God's call, he should not get circumcised. ¹⁹Because being circumcised or not means nothing. What matters is to obey God's commandments. ²⁰Every man should remain as he was when he accepted God's call. ²¹Were you a slave when God called you? Well, never mind; but if you do have a chance to become a free man, use it. ²²For a slave who has been called by the Lord is the Lord's free man; in the same way a free man who has been called by Christ is his slave. ²³God bought you for a price; so do not become men's slaves. ²⁴Brothers, each one should remain in fellowship with God in the same condition he was when he was called.

Was a man already circum- 18
cised when he was called?
He should not become un-
circumcised. Was a man un-
circumcised when he was
called? He should not be cir-
cumcised. Circumcision is 19
nothing and uncircumcision
is nothing. Keeping God's
commands is what counts.
Each one should remain in 20
the situation which he was
in when God called him. 21
Were you a slave when you
were called? Don't let it
trouble you—although if
you can gain your freedom,
do so. For he who was a 22
slave when he was called by
the Lord is the Lord's freed-
man; similarly, he who was
a free man when he was
called is Christ's slave. You 23
were bought at a price; do
not become slaves of men.
Brothers, each man, as re- 24
sponsible to God, should re-
main in the situation God
called him to.

18. **If a circumcised man.** Paul applies the principle of *verse 17* to a specific case. Circumcision was a *live issue* (see *Acts 15:5-21*). If you are already circumcised, don't try to *undo* it. If you are uncircumcised, stay that way. [It was surgically possible at that time to remove the condition of circumcision.]

19. **Means nothing.** Under the rule of the gospel, these human distinctions have no influence on our salvation. See *Gal. 3:28*. **God's commandments.** Not The Law of Moses, but the *law of Christ!* Compare *Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; Matt. 7:21-23*; and notes on "law" at the end of *Rom. 3:31*.

20. **Every man should remain.** "Since the gospel makes no change in your political and social status and obligation, you should remain as you were when you accepted God's call."

21. **Were you a slave?** Perhaps *half* the people of the first century were slaves, and the economy of the Roman world was based on slave labor. The changed attitudes of Christians removed the "sting" of slavery (and in time set all the slaves free). **Well, never mind.** Paul could not emphasize more strongly the fact that human distinctions of politics and society mean nothing! **But if you do.** "If you can gain your freedom by legal means, do it!"

22. **For a slave.** "If you must remain a slave, don't be sad about it, because you are really free in Christ!" **In the same way.** "If you are a free man, don't *look down on* the brother who is a slave, because you are Christ's slave!"

23. **God bought you for a price.** Compare *Acts 20:28; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:14-21*. God buys us from our old owner, *sin*, through the DEATH of his Son! **So do not become men's slaves.** "Do not let human influence turn you away from service to God, or infringe on the devotion which you owe to your Savior!" Paganism put a lot of pressure on Christians! See *1 Pet. 4:3-5; Rev. 2:6,20* and notes.

24. **Brothers, each one should remain.** This is the third time he says this (also *verses 17 & 20*). It may be that Christian slaves at Corinth believed they had no responsibility to their Christian owners (as the false teacher probably taught). Read the Letter to Philemon.

Questions about the Unmarried and the Widows

²⁵Now, the matter about the unmarried: I do not have a command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is worthy of trust.

²⁶Considering the present distress, I think it is better for a man to stay as he is. ²⁷Do you have a wife? Then don't try to get rid of her. Are you unmarried? Then don't look for a wife. ²⁸But if you do marry, you haven't committed a sin; and if an unmarried woman marries, she hasn't committed a sin. But I would rather spare you the everyday troubles that such people will have.

²⁹What I mean, brothers, is this: there is not much time left, and from now on married men should live as though they were not married; ³⁰those who weep, as though they were not sad; those who laugh, as though they were not happy; those who buy, as though they did not own what they bought; ³¹those who deal in worldly goods, as though they were not fully occupied with them. For this world, as it is now, will not last much longer.

Now about virgins: I have 25
no command from the Lord,
but I give a judgment as one
who by the Lord's mercy is
trustworthy. Because of the 26
present crisis, I think that it
is good for you to remain as
you are. Are you married? 27
Do not seek a divorce. Are
you unmarried? Do not look
for a wife. But if you do 28
marry, you have not sinned;
and if a virgin marries, she
has not sinned. But those
who marry will face many
troubles in this life, and I
want to spare you this.

What I mean, brothers, 29
is that the time is short.
From now on those who
have wives should live as if
they had none; those who 30
mourn, as if they did not;
those who are happy, as if
they were not; those who buy
something, as if it were not
theirs to keep; those who use 31
the things of the world, as if
not engrossed in them. For
this world in its present form
is passing away.

25. Now, the matter about the unmarried. *Virgin* is a technical term which can mean *either* a man or a woman (compare *Rev. 14:4* PARTHENON). *Verse 27* makes this plain. In *verses 25-35* Paul uses a new point of view to reinforce his instructions of *verses 8-16*. **But I give my opinion.** He has no direct word from the Lord, but this is his opinion *as an inspired apostle*.

26. **Considering the present distress.** "It will be much easier to meet the persecutions and miseries of the present distress if we have no wives and children to worry about."

27. **Do you have a wife?** If you are married, the Lord decrees that you must not abandon her (see notes on *verses 10-11*). **Are you unmarried?** Either a bachelor or a widower. **Then don't look for a wife.** "Considering the present distress." Note *verse 35*.

28. **But if you do marry.** Even though it might be best not to marry at all, under the circumstances, yet it was no sin if you did! **But I would rather spare you.** "I would like to see you avoid the everyday troubles which marriage and family will certainly bring you, during this time of persecution."

29-31. **There is not much time left.** Paul may mean: (1) the persecutions which Nero would bring against Christians (in less than ten years); (2) the Jewish Wars (in which armed terrorists would rise against Roman rule) which would end in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.; (3) the shortness of life in general. Within half a generation, civil war convulsed the Roman Empire, three emperors in succession were assassinated, and Jerusalem was razed. **As though they were not.** "Those who are aware of the coming crisis will *from this time on* think of all human relationships, conditions, and occupations as temporary and transient." **For this world, as it now is.** "Like the changing scenery of a theater, the pleasures, pains, and glories of this life pass us by."

³²I would like you to be free from worry. An unmarried man concerns himself with the Lord's work, because he is trying to please the Lord; ³³but a married man concerns himself with worldly matters, because he wants to please his wife, ³⁴and so he is pulled in two directions. An unmarried woman or a virgin concerns herself with the Lord's work, because she wants to be dedicated both in body and spirit; but a married woman concerns herself with worldly matters, because she wants to please her husband.

³⁵I am saying this because I want to help you. I am not trying to put restrictions on you. Instead, I want you to do what is right and proper, and give yourselves completely to the Lord's service without any reservation.

³⁶In the case of an engaged couple who have decided not to marry: if the man feels that he is not acting properly toward the girl; if his passions are too strong, and he feels that they ought to marry, then they should get married, as

I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you. I want you to live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.

32. **To be free from worry.** See verse 26. **An unmarried man.** The unmarried man is responsible only for himself, and can give himself to the Lord's work.

33. **But a married man.** This man also is concerned about the Lord's work, but he must take into account his family - how he can please his wife and protect her. [But do not carry this too far. See 1 Cor. 9:5.]

34. **And so he is pulled.** See note on verse 26. **An unmarried woman.** Either a widow or one who has been abandoned (verse 15). **A virgin.** One who has never been married. **Concerns herself.** She is responsible only for herself, and can give herself to the Lord's work. **But a married woman.** She also is pulled in two directions by her concern for the Lord and her concern for her family. [But do not carry this too far. See 1 Cor. 9:5.]

35. **Because I want to help you.** "I am not trying to put restrictions on your right to marry (all the apostles but me are married). But considering the present distress, I am trying to give you the best advice I can." *MacKnight* says: ". . . the apostle recommended to both a single state, if they could therein live contently; because, being fastened to the world with fewer ties, they would leave it with less regret, when called to die for the gospel."

36. **In the case of an engaged couple.** In these next verses, Paul discusses the right to marry. He has strongly defended and recommended celibacy because of the present distress. But he does not forbid marriage! He finds no sin in marriage, and leaves the final decision in each case to the responsible parties involved. Some see in this verse "partners in celibacy," where a couple live together in celibacy like brother and sister, without marriage. The same principle holds true in either case: when physical needs are too strong, it is better to marry than to burn with passion (verse 9). **There is no sin in this.** He is not talking about premarital sex (which is sin), but about getting married! "Partners in celibacy" may have believed marriage to be an unholy thing (see note on verse 1). But God himself decreed marriage (see note on verse 2).

he wants to. There is no sin in this. ³⁷But if a man, without being forced to do so, has firmly made up his mind not to marry; if he has his will under complete control, and has already decided in his own mind what to do—then he does well not to marry the girl. ³⁸So the man who marries his girl does well, but the one who does not marry his girl will do even better.

³⁹A married woman is not free as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, then she is free to be married to the man she wants; but it must be a Christian marriage. ⁴⁰She will be happier, however, if she stays as she is. That is my opinion, and I think that I too have God's Spirit.

The Question about Food Offered to Idols

8 Now, the matter about food offered to idols. It is true, of course, that "all of us have knowledge," as they say. Such knowledge, however, puffs a man up with pride; but love builds

But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I have the Spirit of God.

Meat Sacrificed to Idols

8 Now about meat sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up,

37. **Without being forced to do so.** Times would come when some would force celibacy on Christians (see *1 Tim. 4:1-3*). **Has firmly made up his mind.** He is doing this because he believes it is the best thing for him to do. **His will under complete control.** See note on *verse 9*. **Then he does well not to marry the girl.** To live a celibate life.

38. **Will do even better.** Both are right and proper: to marry, or not to marry. But *not to marry* is better *considering the present distress (verse 26)*.

39. **A married woman.** The letter from Corinth must have asked about widows. While her husband lives, she is not free. But, if he dies (or is divorced scripturally, *Matt. 19:1-9*; or abandons her, *verse 15*), she is free to marry again. **But it must be a Christian marriage.** Not only would the Christian of this century not marry a non-Christian, but the question came up of whether, when one became a Christian, they could go on living with an unbelieving partner (*verses 12-14*).

40. **She will be happier.** See note on *verse 26*. His answer is based on pragmatic considerations. Under different conditions, he recommends marriage (see *1 Tim. 5:14*). **I think that I too have God's Spirit.** He says this in *irony* to the false teacher who questions his inspiration and apostleship.

1. **Food offered to idols.** The temple of an idol (*verse 10*) was a meeting-place for feasting. Constant sacrifices on the idol's altars provided a source of meat. Much of the meat sold in markets and found on the dinner-tables of ordinary citizens, came from the idol's temple. And unless you were told, you could not know the source of the meat (*1 Cor. 10:25-29*). But, can a Christian eat such meat without sinning? In theory, Paul is for *freedom*, based on the *TRUTH* that there is only the one God. In practice, he is for severely restricting the use of meat sacrificed to idols, because of the weak brother who did not understand. [*Holy water* may have grown out of an attempt to *make clean* meat sacrificed to an idol; the idea being that the holy water would remove the ritual impurity of the idol from the meat.] **"All of us have knowledge."** He says this in *irony*. Compare *verse 7*. The Corinthians were proud of their

up. ²The person who thinks he knows something really doesn't know as he ought to know. ³But the man who loves God is known by him.

⁴So then, about eating the food offered to idols: we know that an idol stands for something that does not really exist; we know that there is only the one God. ⁵Even if there are so-called "gods," whether in heaven or on earth, and even though there are many of these "gods" and "lords," ⁶yet there is for us only one God, the Father, who is the creator of all things, and for whom we live; and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live.

⁷But not everyone knows this truth. Some people are so used to idols that to this very day when they eat such food they still think of it as food that belongs to an idol; their conscience is weak and they feel they are defiled by the food. ⁸Food, however, will not improve our relation with God; we shall not lose anything if we do not eat, nor shall we gain anything if we do eat.

but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God. 2 3

So then, about eating meat sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. 4 5 6

But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such meat, they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. 7 8

knowledge. **Puffs a man up with pride.** When they boast about their knowledge, it leads them to despise others (compare *Rom. 14:3-4*). **But love builds up.** Love is the mortar which holds the "living stones" together to build God's temple (*Eph. 2:19-22*).

2. **Who thinks he knows.** Loveless knowledge is destructive. See notes on *Rev. 2:4-5*. True knowledge always makes you humble and loving.

3. **But the man who loves God.** Love means to act toward God as he has already acted toward you. **Is known.** Paul substitutes this for the "has come to know" which we might expect. Compare *2 Tim. 2:19*.

4. **We know that an idol.** "Most of we Christians know that an idol has no reality or power. There is only one God. There can be no other. (See note on *Rom. 16:27*.)"

5. **Even if there are.** The pagan world worshiped many false gods and goddesses.

6. **Yet there is for us.** This affirms what *verse 4* said negatively. "We Christians acknowledge only one God the Father and only one Lord, Jesus Christ. This contrasts with the many gods and lords of paganism." Compare *1 Tim. 2:5; Col. 1:15-17*.

7. **But not everyone knows this truth.** The weak brother believed the idol was just as real as God Himself! For this man to eat the meat which had been sacrificed to an idol, he would feel he was participating in the idol's sacrifice and feel defiled.

8. **Food, however.** The false teacher must have said: "Since the gospel allows us to eat this meat which has been sacrificed to idols, and since eating it does not make us either better or worse, it is part of our Christian liberty to eat it if we please."

⁹Be careful, however, and do not let your freedom of action make those who are weak in the faith fall into sin. ¹⁰Suppose a man whose conscience is weak in this matter sees you, who have "knowledge," eating in the temple of an idol; will not this encourage him to eat food offered to idols? ¹¹And so this weak man, your brother for whom Christ died, will perish because of your "knowledge"! ¹²And in this way you will be sinning against Christ by sinning against your brothers and wounding their weak conscience. ¹³So then, if food makes my brother sin, I will never eat meat again, so as not to make my brother fall into sin.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

Rights and Duties of an Apostle

9 Am I not a free man? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord? And aren't

The Rights of an Apostle

9 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my

9. **Be careful, however.** The false teacher might have said: "You have taught us that God will not judge us by these trivial things that have no reality, such as idols. Eating or not eating, then does not change our relationship to God." Paul says: "Yes, this is true, but be careful of the results of your action." [What Paul permits here, must *modify* the Jerusalem decision in *Acts 15:29*.] If a weak brother eats it thinking he is doing wrong by eating it, he sins (*Rom. 14:23*).

10. **Suppose a man.** "Your example may have great influence over a weak brother, and encourage him to do something which he believes to be wrong."

11. **And so this weak man.** Because he sins in eating (*Rom. 14:23*), he may perish; or he might be led back into idolatry.

12. **And in this way.** Each Christian is a *proxy* of Christ. See note on *Acts 9:4*. If you sin against your brother, you sin against Christ!

13. **So then.** The rule of love prevents creating a fuss over things which are not important and only matters of opinion. If food is the problem, Paul will give up meat altogether, rather than be the cause of his brother sinning! See what Paul says in *1 Cor. 9:19-22*.

1. **Am I not a free man?** The false teacher at Corinth was a Christian (see note on *1 Cor. 3:5*), but his motives were not right. He thought the gospel was a way to get rich (*1 Tim. 6:5*), although it would not be right to say that he was totally wicked. But because of his attitude toward money, he was amazed to find that Paul had not taken one cent from the Corinthians when he preached there. See note on *2 Cor. 11:8*. Because he did intend to take money from them, he believed he had to destroy Paul's authority as an apostle. "If Paul is an apostle, why didn't he use the rights of an apostle? Why is he living a celibate life when the other apostles, especially Peter, are married?" The Corinthians must have asked about these things when they wrote to Paul. Paul says he is a free man - free to demand they pay him a salary, and free not to take a cent from them if he chooses. **Am I not an apostle:** God himself called Paul to be an apostle. See note on *1 Cor. 1:1*. **Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord?** Paul saw Jesus in person, and this made him a witness to the resurrection (see *Gal. 1:10-17*). **And aren't you the result?** The church (messianic community) at Corinth proved that he was *their* apostle.

you the result of my work for the Lord? ²Even if others do not accept me as an apostle, surely you do! You yourselves, because of your life in the Lord, are proof of the fact that I am an apostle.

³When people criticize me, this is how I defend myself: ⁴Don't I have the right to be given food and drink for my work? ⁵Don't I have the right to do what the other apostles do, and the Lord's brothers, and Peter, and take a Christian wife with me on my trips? ⁶Or are Barnabas and I the only ones who have to work for our living? ⁷What soldier ever has to pay his own expenses in the army? What farmer does not eat the grapes from his own vineyard? What shephard does not use the milk from his own sheep?

⁸I don't have to limit myself to these everyday examples, because the Law says the same thing. ⁹We read in the Law of Moses, "Do not tie up the mouth of the ox when it treads out the

work in the Lord? Even ² though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

This is my defense to ³ those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we have the right ⁴ to food and drink? Don't we ⁵ have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas ⁶ who must work for a living?

Who serves as a soldier at ⁷ his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who ⁸ tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say ⁹ this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For ⁹ it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned?

2. **Surely you do!** He had worked among them with power and the Holy Spirit. Compare *2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Thess. 1:5*. **You yourselves.** The Corinthian Christians were living proof of Paul's preaching and power.

3. **This is how I defend myself.** By pointing to the Corinthian Christians as living proof!

4. **Don't I have the right?** Even though he did not use this right, he had it. Compare *2 Thess. 3:9* and note.

5. **And take a Christian wife with me?** The other apostles did this, and asked the church to pay their bills wherever they went. **The Lord's brothers,** who would be of special interest to the false teacher, also did this. **And Peter.** [*Cephas* is the Aramaic version of *Peter*.] Peter was a married man and continued to live with his wife as an apostle, taking her along with him on his tours of mission. Compare note on *1 Cor. 7:3*.

6. **Or are Barnabas and I?** Both Barnabas and Paul refused to take money from the people they were teaching the gospel (*but see note on 2 Cor. 11:8*). As an apostle, Paul had the right to: (1) receive a salary from the church; (2) have a wife; (3) not have to work at other things for his living. [This mention of Barnabas shows they were still close friends in spite of their difference of opinion over John Mark (*Acts 15:39*).]

7. **What soldier?** He uses three examples to show his right to receive a salary from them: (1) soldiers were paid to go on a campaign; (2) farmers ate their own produce; (3) shepherds used milk from their own sheep.

8. **Because the Law says the same thing.** The Law was terminated as a means of salvation (*Rom. 3:19-21*); but it remains a revelation of truth and right (*Rom. 7:12-14*), and Paul uses it to teach a lesson to us.

9. **We read.** *Deut. 25:4*. The people of the East threshed their grain by making cattle walk on the heads of grain to free the individual grains from the stalk. See note on *Matt. 3:12*. **Now, is God?** "Does God speak here only about humane treatment of oxen?"

grain." Now, is God concerned about oxen? ¹⁰Or did he not really mean us when he said this? Of course this was written for us. The man who plows and the man who reaps should do their work in the hope of getting a share of the crop. ¹¹We have sown spiritual seed among you. Is it too much if we reap material benefits from you? ¹²If others have the right to expect this from you, don't we have an even greater right?

But we haven't made use of this right. Instead, we have endured everything in order not to put any obstacle in the way of the Good News about Christ. ¹³Surely you know that the men who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who offer the sacrifices on the altar get a share of the sacrifices. ¹⁴In the same way, the Lord has ordered that those who preach the gospel should get their living from it.

¹⁵But I haven't made use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this now in order to claim such

Surely he says this for us, ¹⁰ doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have ¹¹ sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of ¹² support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Don't you know that ¹³ those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the ¹⁴ same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

But I have not used any of ¹⁵ these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that

10. **Of course this was written for us.** To teach us that we ought to support those who work to help us. *Material gain* is not in itself a *bad motive!* Both the man who plows and the man who reaps expect to get a share of the crop. Not *money*, but the *love of money* is a source of all kinds of evil (*1 Tim. 6:10*). The difference between the *hired man* and the *shepherd* (*John 10:11-13*) is not receiving a profit (both receive a profit from the sheep), but in *attitude*. The *hired man* has no love for the sheep; the *shepherd* does!

11. **We have sown.** They brought the Good News to them, made them disciples of Christ, and made them strong in the faith. **If we reap material benefits?** "Some food and drink - a salary, in other words."

12. **If others have the right?** The false teacher and his associates demanded financial support from the Corinthian church. If they thought these had the right to these things, didn't they understand Paul had an even greater claim on their resources??? **But we haven't made use.** Paul felt that taking a salary from the people he was preaching to, might be misunderstood by the pagans, who might accuse him of preaching such things only to make himself rich. For this reason, he often supported himself by working at some other kind of work (*Acts 18:3*), or drew a salary from another church (*2 Cor. 11:8*). In some situations a "tent-making" preacher has the best chance of success.

13. **Surely you know.** The Temple teaches the same lesson. Part of the sacrifice was burnt on the altar, and part went to the Priests and Levites.

14. **In the same way.** It is the Lord himself who has ordered that those who preach should be supported by the group (church). Compare *Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7; Gal. 6:6*.

15. **But I haven't made use.** "Even though I have shown you that both the Law and the gospel authorize these rights for me, I have purposely not used them!" From here on Paul finishes this chapter writing in the first person singular, telling us his thoughts, motives, and reasons for his actions. **Nor am I writing this now.** Compare what he says in *2 Cor. 11:7-10*. Paul would rather starve to death, than to

rights for myself. I would rather die first! Nobody is going to turn by rightful boast into empty words! ¹⁶I have no right to boast just because I preach the gospel. After all, I am under orders to do so. And how terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the gospel! ¹⁷If I did my work as a matter of free choice, then I could expect to be paid; but since I do it as a matter of duty, it is because God has entrusted me with this task. ¹⁸What pay do I get, then? It is the privilege of preaching the Good News without charging for it, without claiming my rights in my work for the gospel.

¹⁹I am a free man, nobody's slave; but I make myself everybody's slave in order to win as many

you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. Yet when I ¹⁶ preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I ¹⁷ preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? ¹⁸ Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.

Though I am free and be- ¹⁹ long to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to

allow the Corinthian church to pay his way! **My rightful boast.** He never will be dependent on Corinthian pay, because this would destroy his rightful boast. The key to this is found in *2 Cor. 11:12*. Those who opposed Paul demanded the church support them in luxury! But because they will be compared to Paul, they must discredit him. Paul *undermines* their claims by refusing support from the Corinthian church. If he accepted its money, he would be doing his enemies a favor and help prove their claims.

16. Just because I preach the gospel. Being a teacher gives Paul no right to boast about it. The false teacher boasted very much about himself, so Paul makes a strong statement that he is Christ's slave (*verse 17*; see note on *1 Cor. 4:1, 6*). **And how terrible it would be!** As an apostle, Paul is a "soldier under orders," and if he did not fulfill his mission, he would expect to be punished. [Some see in *Phil. 3:12* Paul saying that he is an enemy taken captive, who must serve his captor. (1) Paul was trying his best to serve God when he met Jesus; (2) We are all enemies who have been taken captive and changed into friends of God.]

17. As a matter of free choice. Here again we see Paul contrasting himself with the false teacher who was a "self-appointed apostle." Paul emphasizes that he is a slave of Christ, only doing his duty. Therefore he had no reason to boast about it (compare *Luke 17:7-10*). [Don't read too much into what Paul says. The special circumstances at Corinth called for special action. Paul did receive money for his work (*2 Cor. 11:8*), but he would not accept one cent from the Corinthian church. See note on *verse 15*.]

18. What pay do I get then? Only the satisfaction felt by the generous mind who does volunteer service (compare *Acts 20:33-35*). Paul "boasts" that while the Corinthians spend nothing on him, he spends himself on them! Compare *2 Cor. 12:14-15*.

19. I am a free man. See *verse 1* and note. **In order to win.** There is a special beauty in this verse. Slaves worked for their masters without pay, and jumped to obey their every wish! Paul, in preaching the Good News, makes himself a slave by refusing to take pay from those he works to turn to Christ, also he limits his own freedom by following their prejudices and weaknesses (where he can do this without violating the Law of Christ). He does this to win as many to Christ as possible!

as possible. ²⁰While working with the Jews, I live like a Jew in order to win them; and even though I myself am not subject to the Law of Moses, I live as though I were, when working with those who are, in order to win them. ²¹In the same way, when with Gentiles I live like a Gentile, outside the Jewish Law, in order to win Gentiles. This does not mean that I don't obey God's law; I am really under Christ's law. ²²Among the weak in faith I become weak like one of them, in order to win them. So I become all things to all men, that I may save some of them by any means possible.

²³All this I do for the gospel's sake, in order to share in its blessings. ²⁴Surely you know that in a race all the runners take part in it, but only one of them wins the prize. Run, then, in such a way as to win the prize. ²⁵Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline; he does so in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; but

win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown of laurel that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for-

20. While working with the Jews. Paul shows us how he *identified* with those he worked among. When he worked with Jews, he was as Jewish as anyone could be. He followed their dietary laws, attended their feasts (*Acts 21:26*), and had Timothy circumcised (*Acts 16:3*). But in doing this, he did not compromise *one truth* of the gospel! [Compare *Gal. 2:3-5, 14.*]

21. When with Gentiles. Only the Jews had The Law, so everyone else was a Gentile. Neither Paul nor any Christian preacher, was an *enforcer* of the Law (*compare Acts 15:19-21*). When Paul was in Athens (*Acts 17*), he spoke to the people there as a *Gentile!* He "forgot" his *Jewishness*, yet he never forgot Christ's law!

22. Among the weak in faith. Who still believe some things are sins which are perfectly lawful. An example of this is the vegetarian (*Rom. 14:1-3*). Paul advised the *strong* to adapt themselves to the *weak* (*1 Cor. 8*). So I become all things to all men. Paul speaks of no unchristian compromise with human wisdom, but in things which were harmless and pure, he became like them. Anyone who expects to turn people to Christ, must share their culture and customs, but not their sins.

23. All this I do for the gospel's sake. When Paul made himself everybody's slave, it was for one purpose: to promote the gospel! Compare *Phil. 3:7-14*. Every Christian ought to have this as their highest priority of life: *to promote the gospel!*

24. Surely you know. Paul uses symbolism that they understand. In a race, only the winner gets the prize. The Isthmian Games (*see introduction*) were held at Corinth. "If you run in the race, you run to win the prize!" [But in the Christian Race, the success of one does not disqualify the others.]

25. Submits to strict discipline. "If you expect to have a chance to win in the games, you must go into training to develop and strengthen your body." **That will last forever.** The wreath of flowers or pine leaves would soon wither and dry up. We expect to win a crown that is *eternal* (*1 Pet. 5:4*).

we do it for one that will last forever. ²⁶That is why I run straight for the finish line; that is why I am like a boxer, who does not waste his punches. ²⁷I harden my body with blows and bring it under complete control, to keep from being rejected myself after having called others to the contest.

Warning against Idols

10 I want you to remember, brothers, what happened to our ancestors who followed Moses. They were all under the protection of the cloud, and all passed safely through the Red Sea. ²In the cloud and in the sea they were all baptized as followers of Moses. ³All ate the same spiritual

ever. Therefore, I do not run ²⁶ like man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man shadow boxing. No, I beat ²⁷ my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Warnings From Israel's History

10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into ² Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the ³

26. That is why. Paul has a definite goal! He runs straight for the finish line, and ignores all else! As a boxer, he wastes no time *shadow boxing!* In the games, the judges watched each contestant closely.

27. And bring it under complete control. Paul accepts as necessary the strict discipline of his own body, if he is to win the race. Compare *2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:1-2*. **To keep from being rejected.** I cannot believe that Paul had any great fear of this, even though it was a possibility. **After having called others.** At the beginning of the games, a herald called out the names of the contestants, who were then examined to be certain they were qualified to compete. After the contest, each of the competitors was again examined and judged on the basis of how well they had competed. If the judges felt they had not done their best, they were disqualified and lost the prize. Even though the victory is already won in *Christ on the cross*, we personally can be disqualified. We must try hard to make God's choice of us a permanent experience (*2 Pet. 1:10*).

1. I want you to remember, brothers. In the final verse of the previous chapter, Paul mentioned the possibility of himself being rejected. This is not an *unreal fear*, as the history of Israel shows. The false teacher at Corinth had taught that when you turned to Christ, you became such a *favorite* of God that He would not be angry with you if you joined in the feasts in the idol's temple. "In this way you would build good will, and save yourself from persecution." The Corinthians must have asked Paul: (1) Is it all right to join in the feasts in the idol's temple? (2) Is it all right to buy meat in the market, which has been sacrificed to idols? (3) When invited to the home of an unbeliever, could they eat meat there which had been sacrificed to an idol? *Schaff* says: "It is worthy of note that he selects his examples from that part of Israelitish history which has an analogy in the baptismal commencement and the eucharistic nourishment of the Christian life."

2. They were all baptized as followers of Moses. Scholars see in *being under the cloud* and *passing safely through the sea* the double-process of SUBMERSION and EMERGENCE in baptism. Compare note on *Acts 8:38-39*. In this act, they committed themselves to the leadership of Moses, showed their belief in his *divine* mission, and entered through him into fellowship with God. All this is symbolic of the one who becomes a Christian by escaping from the slavery of sin, who commits himself to the leadership of Christ, and shows his belief in the *divine* mission of Christ by being "buried with him in baptism" (see *Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27*).

3. All ate. The *manna* (*Exod. 16:15*) is called "spiritual bread" because it was given to them in a supernatural way, and because it was symbolic of the spiritual bread of Christians (the words of Christ, see note on *John 6:51*).

bread, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from that spiritual rock that went along with them; and that rock was Christ himself. ⁵But even then God was not pleased with most of them, and so their dead bodies were scattered over the desert.

⁶Now, all these things are examples for us, to warn us not to desire evil things, as they did, ⁷nor to worship idols, as some of them did. As the scripture says, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to dance." ⁸We must not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them fell dead. ⁹We must not put the Lord to the test, as some of them did—and they were killed by the snakes. ¹⁰You must not complain, as some of them did—and they were destroyed by the Angel of Death.

same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, so their bodies were scattered over the desert.

Now these things occurred as examples, to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some 10 of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

4. **And all drank.** Water was given to them in a supernatural way (*Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:11*). **That went along with them.** From this rock (Christ) they drank *in spirit*, while their bodies drank from the water flowing at their feet. The rock that went along with them was *not symbolic* of Christ, but was *Christ himself!* See *John 7:37*.

5. **But even then.** "All" were baptized, "all" ate, "all" drank. But in spite of the blessing from God, most of them did not please God, as Paul goes on to show us in *verses 7-10*.

6. **All these things are examples for us.** We clearly see human nature in the things these people did! They turned away from God, and ran after evil. They had been slaves for four centuries in Egypt. They still thought like slaves, and desired the evil things of Egypt. The application is that we have all been slaves to sin, but we must not allow our desire for the evil of sin to turn us away from God!

7. **Nor to worship idols.** Israel turned to idols in the desert. (*Exod. 32:1-6*), and worshiped the golden calf. The Corinthians had turned from idols to become Christians (compare *1 Thess. 1:9* and note). There was real danger to them from their old ways. **To eat and drink.** At a feast honoring the golden calf. **And got up to dance.** This dancing was one of the rituals by which the pagans worshiped their gods. The Israelites worshiped the golden calf in this way (*Exod. 32:19*).

8. **We must not commit sexual immorality.** *Immorality* is a sex act involving someone other than the lawful spouse. It includes acts between woman and woman; between man and man; and between a man and a woman who are not married to each other. The technical term is "fornication." This was a very common sin in Corinth. See note on *1 Cor. 5:1*. [The incident Paul refers to is found in *Num. 25:1-10*.]

9. **We must not put the Lord.** [The Latin Vulgate has "Christ."] See *Num. 21:4-6* for this incident. The point is we must not allow our hardships to make us discontent, nor yearn for the sinful pleasures of the old life.

10. **You must not complain.** This happened when the spies reported the size and strength of the inhabitants of Canaan. See *Num. 13:30 - 14:14*. The real problem was that they did not really believe God.

¹¹All these things happened to them as examples for others, and they were written down as a warning for us. For we live at the time when the end is about to come.

¹²Whoever thinks he is standing up had better be careful that he does not fall. ¹³Every temptation that has come your way is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power to resist; at the time you are tempted he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out.

¹⁴So then, my dear friends, keep away from the worship of idols. ¹⁵I speak to you as sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶The cup of blessing for which we give thanks to God: do we not share in the blood of Christ when we

These things happened to 11
them as examples and were
written down as warnings
for us, on whom the fulfill-
ment of the ages has come.
So, if you think you are 12
standing firm, be careful
that you don't fall! No
temptation has seized you 13
except what is common to
man. And God is faithful;
he will not let you be tempt-
ed beyond what you can
bear. But when you are
tempted, he will also provide
a way out so that you can
stand up under it.

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

Therefore, my dear 14
friends, flee from idolatry. I 15
speak to sensible people;
judge for yourselves what I
say. Is not the cup of thanks- 16
giving for which we give
thanks a participation in the

11. **All these things happened to them as examples.** Compare *verse 6*. The story of these things serves as a lesson for all time. We may not sin expecting that because we are God's people, he will not punish us. After he had rescued Israel from Egypt, he still punished those who sinned. **For we live at a time.** (1) The end or termination of the Jewish Age was about fifteen years away. (2) Both Jewish and Gentile history converged (under God's direction) in Christianity (*Acts 15:15-18; 17:26-28*). (3) *The Last Days* began at Pentecost (*Acts 2:16-17*). This is the *New Age of Matt. 19:28* (see note there).

12. **Whoever.** The one who stands with such confidence on the grace of God, that he thinks he can sin and *get away with it*, is in for a *fall!* The one who turns inward to his own personal experience and trusts in that, will have little to sustain him in the time of hard testing! The only safe way is to put our faith in *Christ on the cross!*

13. **Every temptation.** The Corinthians may have thought their temptations were unusually severe. To show they had no excuse for joining in the feasts in the idol's temple to escape persecution, Paul says this is only the kind of temptation that normally comes to people. **But God keeps his promise.** Temptation does not come from God (*James 1:12-15*), but God *limits it*. **Beyond your power to resist.** "God will not allow anything to come your way that you and He together cannot overcome." **With a way out.** With each temptation comes a way to either bear it or escape it. "*Every problem contains an opportunity, and every opportunity contains a problem.*" Compare note on *Acts 28:16*.

14. **Keep away from the worship of idols.** Drunkenness and immorality were part of the idol's worship. The only way to deal with this was to *keep away* from it!!!

15. **I speak to you as sensible people.** "I want to show you that eating the sacrifice in the idol's temple is real worshiping of the idol."

16. **The cup of blessing.** By this he means the fruit of the grape which is used in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal). [At this point in time, *any Christian man* had the *AUTHORITY* to give thanks to God for the cup and the bread.] **Do we not share?** We share or participate in all the blessings bought for us by the

drink from this cup? And the bread we break: do we not share in the body of Christ when we eat this bread? ¹⁷Because there is the one bread, all of us, though many, are one body, because we all share the same loaf.

¹⁸Consider the Hebrew people; those who eat what is offered in sacrifice share in the altar's service to God. ¹⁹What do I mean? That an idol or the food offered to it really amounts to anything? ²⁰No! What I am saying is that what is sacrificed on pagan altars is offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be partners with demons. ²¹You cannot drink from the Lord's cup and also from the cup of demons; you cannot eat at the Lord's table and also at

blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of

blood/death of Christ. [If the contents of the cup became *literal blood*, this would conflict with *Acts 15:20*.] Paul shows that by sharing and participating in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal), they were by this proclaiming they had the same object of worship, the same faith, the same hope, and the same character as those with whom they united in this act of religion. **The body of Christ** is his church (*Eph. 1:23*). See what Paul says in the next verse.

17. **Because there is one bread.** Pauls shows here how vital to the church is the sharing/participating in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal). This was being *defiled* by their taking part in the idol's feasts. [Since Jesus built only *one church* (one spiritual congregation of the saved), the *one bread* and *one cup* are a symbolic/reality of the *oneness* with God which we have through the death of Christ.] *Lipscomb* says: "We who partake [participate] are members individually, but we constitute one body of Christ because we all draw our life from the blood and partake of one bread, the body of Christ. So we are *one* body in Christ."

18. **Consider the Hebrew people.** Part of each sacrifice was eaten by those who served in the temple, and part burnt on the altar to God. By doing this they shared with God, in the sacrifice. The false teacher (who was also a Jew) had advised the Corinthian Christians to eat the idol sacrifices (in the idol's temple). Those who did this were *sharing* in the idol's sacrifice.

19. **What do I mean?** "Am I saying that an idol is a real "God," or that a sacrifice to an idol is a sacrifice to a real "God?"

20. **No!** He strongly denies the *reality* of the idol (see *1 Cor. 8:4-6*). **Is offered to demons.** The demons were the spirits of dead men. The "gods" of the Gentiles were mostly dead kings and heroes who had been "*made gods*." In the minds of those who worshiped them, they were *real*!

21. **You cannot drink.** In the pagan sacrifices, before the priests poured the wine on the sacrifice, they tasted it themselves and held it out to those who brought the sacrifice, for them to taste it also, and so share in the sacrifice. Sharing in the one prevents sharing in the other! **You cannot eat.** The idol's sacrifices were eaten on a table in the idol's temple, which was the *table of demons* in contrast to the *Lord's table* [from which the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) was served]. God is worshiped out of a holy life; the idol is worshiped out of an unholy life!

the table of demons. ²²Or do we want to make the Lord jealous? Do we think that we are stronger than he?

²³"We are allowed to do anything," so they say. Yes, but not everything is good. "We are allowed to do anything"—but not everything is helpful. ²⁴No one should be looking out for his own interests, but for the interests of others.

²⁵You are free to eat anything sold in the meat market, without asking any questions because of conscience. ²⁶For, as the scripture says, "The earth and everything in it belong to the Lord."

²⁷If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you decide to go, eat what is set before you without asking any questions because of conscience. ²⁸But if someone tells you, "This is food that was offered to idols," then do not eat that food, for the sake of the one who told you so and for conscience' sake—²⁹that is, not your own conscience, but the other man's conscience.

"Well, then," someone asks, "why should my freedom to act be limited by another person's

demons. Are we trying to ²²arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

The Believer's Freedom

"Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. No ²⁴body should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Eat anything sold in the ²⁵meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, ²⁶"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

If some unbeliever invites ²⁷you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. But ²⁸if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake—the other ²⁹man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by a-

22. Or do we want to make the Lord jealous? As sensible men, they must see the *absurdity*, as well as the *danger*, in such double-dealing. Jehovah is a jealous God (*Exod. 20:5*). He will not share his worshipers with demons!

23. We are allowed to do anything. This was a *slogan* of the Corinthian church (see note on *1 Cor. 6:12*). Yes, but. Christian liberty must be limited to make it both kind and helpful. Even though we may be allowed to do something, the effect on others could make it a sin (*1 Cor. 8:1-3, 9, 12, 13*).

24. But for the interests of others. Selfishness will destroy us; unselfishness will make us strong! Compare *1 Cor. 13:5; Rom. 14:7; 15:2; Gal. 6:2; Phil. 2:1-4*.

25. Anything sold in the meat market. No one could be suspected of idol worship because he bought meat in the meat market. This was completely separated from the idol's temple and the worship of demons. Without asking any questions. Do not make yourself worry needlessly.

26. For, as the scripture says. He quotes *Psalms 24:1* to show that no demon has any claim on the earth and everything in it! Compare *1 Tim. 4:3-5*.

27. If an unbeliever. The Christian is not required to *cut himself off* from society (see *1 Cor. 5:9-13* and notes). Without asking any questions. Because of your knowledge that the earth belongs to the Lord (verse 26).

28. But if someone tells you. Then don't eat it; not because the food is *defiled*, but because of the conscience of the *unbeliever*.

29. But the other man's conscience. "You know that eating such food is not worshipping the idol. But if the unbeliever (or a weak brother) sees you do this when you *know* it has been sacrificed to the idol, he will think you a hypocrite and you cannot lead him to Christ."

conscience? ³⁰If I thank God for my food, why should anyone criticize me about food for which I give thanks?"

³¹Well, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for God's glory. ³²Live in such a way as to cause no trouble either to Jews, or Gentiles, or to the church of God. ³³Just do as I do; I try to please everyone in all that I do, with no thought of my own good, but for the good of all, so that they might be saved.

11 Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.

Covering the Head in Worship

²I praise you, because you always remember me and follow the teachings that I have handed on to you. ³But I want you to understand that Christ is supreme over every man, the husband is supreme over his wife, and God is supreme

another's conscience? If I ³⁰take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

So whether you eat or ³¹drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to ³²stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please ³³everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

11 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Propriety in Worship

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. ²

Now I want you to realize ³that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the

30. **If I thank God?** "If I can eat this with a clear conscience, why should I allow someone else to limit my freedom to act?"

31. **Do it all for God's glory.** This is the answer to the whole question of Christian ethics. (1) Do it with thanks to God; (2) Be helpful to weak brothers; (3) Follow God's rules.

32. **As to cause no trouble.** Do nothing that would cause a scandal or create prejudice.

33. **Just do as I do.** Where no principle of Truth was involved, Paul tried to please everyone! See *1 Cor. 9:19-23* and notes.

1. **Just as I imitate Christ.** Christ alone is the perfect model. This ties in with verse 33 of chapter 10.

2. **I praise you.** Paul's praise for them is sincere and truthful. But there may be some irony in it, and he may be quoting something which they said in their letter to him. In the next verses, he scolds them strongly. [From the things Paul writes, it seems that some of the Corinthian women prayed and spoke God's message as teachers, in the Christian assemblies. MacKnight thinks they only pretended to be inspired, but compare *Acts 2:17; 21:9* and notes. At Corinth, decent women wore a face-veil which covered both their head and face. (Among the Jews, it was usually only prostitutes who did this. See *Gen. 38:14-15*.) While teaching in public, these women had thrown off their face-veils, like the prostitute-priestesses in the idol temples. This caused trouble (see Paul's instruction in *1 Cor. 10:32*.)

3. **Christ is supreme.** He is the "one Lord" of created nature (*1 Cor. 8:6*), therefore superior to every created thing, including the man (male). **The husband is supreme.** This is God's decree: "And he will rule over you" (*Gen. 3:16*). However, notice that both are *one* in Christ (*Gal. 3:28*). The order of rank stands: God / Christ / man / woman.

over Christ. ⁴So a man who prays or speaks God's message in public worship with his head covered disgraces Christ. ⁵And any woman who prays or speaks God's message in public worship with nothing on her head disgraces her husband; there is no difference between her and a woman whose head has been shaved. ⁶If the woman does not cover her head, she might as well cut her hair. And since it is a shameful thing for a woman to shave her head or cut her hair, she should cover her head. ⁷A man has no need to cover his head, because he reflects the image and glory of God. But woman reflects the glory of man; ⁸for man was not created from woman, but woman from man. ⁹Nor was man created for woman's sake, but woman was created for man's sake. ¹⁰On account of the angels, then, a woman should have a covering over her head to

head of Christ is God. Every 4
man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And 5
every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though 6
her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For 10
this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

4. **So a man.** At Corinth, a man who prayed or spoke God's message with his head covered (with a face-veil) would disgrace Christ. Pagan priests covered their heads. [However, Jewish priests did too. See *Exod. 28:40*.] Both men and women ought to dress in such a way that they do not violate the customs and standards of decency in whatever country they live in.

5. **And any woman.** Paul does not forbid their praying or speaking in public worship, but he does say they disgrace their husbands by doing it unveiled, when they live in Corinth. **There is no difference.** Eastern women were very proud of their long hair. It would be a disgrace to shave their head.

6. **If the woman does not cover her head.** "If a woman prefers to have her head bare, she should remove her hair also. If doing that would disgrace her, then she should wear the face-veil." At Corinth, women wore two coverings on their heads: their hair (*verse 15*) and a face-veil (*verse 5*). Jewish women wore only the covering of hair. [See C. R. Nichol's book: *God's Woman*.]

7. **A man has no need.** At Corinth, the face-veil was symbolic of being lower in rank. In this whole section, we must remember Paul deals with Eastern ideas of the relationship of men and women. At Corinth it would be as wrong for a man to have his head veiled, as it would be for a woman to have hers unveiled. [Yet Jewish men covered their heads at prayer (compare *2 Cor. 3:14-16*), and it is probable that some Christian Jews continued to do this.]

8. **But woman from man:** In Creation, the male was first and the female was made from him. Paul also says this in *1 Tim. 2:13-14*. [Yet BOTH are in the image of God (*Gen. 1:26-27*).]

9. **But woman was created for man's sake.** "And God the Eternal said: It is not good, that the man is alone; I will create to him a companion-counterpart to him." (Zamenhof's version of *Gen. 2:18*) Compare also *1 Cor. 7:3-5* and notes.

10. **On account of the angels.** This phrase has puzzled scholars. It may mean: (1) Because Eve was seduced to sin by evil angels (*1 Tim. 2:14*). [*MacKnight*.] (2) To show respect to the preacher/church leader - who is called the angel in *Rev. 1:20*. (3) Because the good angels watch with interest all that is done by Christ's servants (*1 Cor. 4:9*). (4) If we change AGGELOUS to AGGELLAS, the phrase would read *during the preaching*. But there is no authority to do this! **That she is under her husband's authority.** At Corinth, a woman wore a face-veil *everywhere* (except the privacy of her own home) to show she was under the man's authority. This custom has been kept up in Arab lands until just recently.

show that she is under husband's authority. ¹¹In our life in the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹²For as woman was made from man, in the same way man is born of woman; and all things come from God.

¹³Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God in public worship with nothing on her head? ¹⁴Why, nature itself teaches you that long hair is a disgraceful thing for a man, ¹⁵but is a woman's pride. Her long hair has been given her to serve as a covering. ¹⁶But if anyone wants to argue about it, all I have to say is that neither we nor the churches of God have any other custom in worship.

In the Lord, however, ¹¹woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as ¹²woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: ¹³Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the ¹⁴very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long ¹⁵hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to ¹⁶be contentious about this, have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

11-12. **In our life in the Lord.** By God's decree, the one cannot exist without the other. Woman is subordinate, but not inferior. In the pagan world, woman was a slave, often not much better off than an animal. In Christ she is raised to her rightful place and stands with man as his *counterpart*. See note on *1 Tim. 2:15*. The terms of salvation are the same for both!

13. **Judge for yourselves.** "You are sensible people. Think how this looks to others." **Is it proper?** By your own standards of conduct and custom. [Note that Hannah prayed in the temple without a face-veil (*1 Sam. 1:12-13*).]

14. **Why, nature itself teaches you.** PHYSIS - nature - is translated *own free will* in *Rom. 2:14*. Thayer says it means here: *the native sense of propriety* [decency]. *Short* and *long* are relative terms, but it is universal that men wear their hair shorter and women longer. [Some think the *homosexual prostitutes* (male) at Corinth wore long, flowing hair. But so did the *Nazarites* in the Jewish world (*Num. 6:5*).] At Corinth, it would have violated *1 Cor. 10:32* for a man to wear long hair, or a woman to go outside her house without wearing a face-veil.

15. **But is a woman's pride.** This is in contrast to what he says in *verse 14*. While long hair would disgrace a man, it is a source of pride to a woman. **As a covering.** To identify her as a woman and to show her relationship to man. C. R. Nichol writes: "Custom today calls for shorter hair than it did in the days of my boyhood; yet women's hair dressed in the style of today is as identifying and serves as a covering as it did when women wore it long. In Corinth there were some who would dictate the length of woman's hair, and today there are some who speak as though they were authority, and dictate the length necessary for a woman to have her hair, else she will never enter heaven." [This whole question of woman's role in Christianity is discussed in C. R. Nichol's book, *God's Woman*.]

16. **But if anyone wants to argue about it.** Paul says this to the false teacher and his party. They argued that Christian freedom allowed the women who prayed and spoke God's message in public worship to do this without wearing the face-veil. John Wesley writes: "The several churches that were in the apostles' time had different customs in things that were not essential; and that under one and the same apostle, as circumstances, in different places, made it convenient. And in all things merely indifferent the custom of each place was of sufficient weight to determine prudent and peaceable men. Yet even this cannot overrule a scrupulous conscience, which really doubts whether the thing be indifferent or not. But those who are referred to here by the apostle were contentious, not conscientious, persons."

The Lord's Supper

¹⁷In the following instructions, however, I do not praise you; because your church meetings actually do more harm than good. ¹⁸In the first place, I have been told that there are opposing groups in your church meetings; and this I believe is partly true. ¹⁹(No doubt there must be divisions among you so that the ones who are in the right may be clearly seen.) ²⁰When you meet together as a group, you do not come to eat the Lord's Supper. ²¹For as you eat, each one goes ahead with his own meal, so that some

The Lord's Supper

In the following directives 17 I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first 18 place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there 19 have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it 20 is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of 21 you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, an-

17. In the following instructions, however. He cannot praise their attitude. Actually do more harm. One purpose of their church meetings was to unite them more closely to the Lord, and to each other. But their church meetings were disrupted by "feuding and fussing"

18. In the first place. First was "opposing groups in your church meetings;" second was misuse of spiritual gifts (*chapter 12*). Opposing groups. This is the key to what he says about the Lord's Supper. It also helps if we will remember that the church of the first few centuries ate the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) in the context or setting of a fellowship meal (see note on *Acts 20:7*). *Tertullian* describes these ancient fellowship meals (love suppers). *MacKnight* says: "Christ having instituted his Supper after he had eaten the passover, his disciples very early made it a rule to feast together before they ate the Lord's Supper. The feasts were called (AGAPAI, Charitates) *Love feasts*. They are mentioned in *Jude ver. 12*, and also by some of the ancient Christian writers." These fellowship meals were continued in the church until the middle of the fourth century. At that time they were prohibited. The Roman Catholic church developed the idea of "fasting communion" (no food between midnight and the taking of the Communion).

19. (No doubt there must be divisions.) Because of human nature, such things could not be avoided, but this did not make them right. However, by our reaction to such things, we demonstrate our faith and love for God and our fellow Christians to clearly see! Compare *1 Cor. 1:10-17* and notes.

20. As a group. In scripture, the church is NEVER the building, but always the group of people. You do not come. When they came together as a group, normally they would first eat their fellowship meal; then later they would eat the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) as part of their worship (see note on *verse 18*). You do not come. This can mean: (1) They omitted the Lord's Supper; (2) Their conduct disqualified their eating the Lord's Supper.

21. For as you eat. *Johnson* says: "It was customary in Corinth to eat a meal together as did Christ and his disciples the night of the Lord's Supper. After this came the Lord's Supper. At this meal each party in Corinth sat apart and ate when it [the party] was ready. The result was that some began before others. One would be hungry and another drunken. This last phrase means that he had eaten and was satisfied." This distorted the very purpose of the fellowship meal. *Benson* writes: "They were called *love feasts* or suppers, because the richer Christians brought in a variety of provisions to feed the poor, the fatherless, the widows, and strangers, and ate with them to show their love to them." Due to conditions in the first century, the fellowship meal would be the only "square meal" many of the poor would have during the week!

are hungry while others get drunk. ²²Don't you have your own homes in which to eat and drink? Or would you rather despise the church of God and put to shame the people who are in need? What do you expect me to say to you about this? Should I praise you? Of course I do not praise you!

²³For from the Lord I received the teaching that I passed on to you: that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took the bread, ²⁴gave thanks to God, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me." ²⁵In the same way, he took the cup after the supper and said, "This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you

other gets drunk. Don't you ²² have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!

For I received from the ²³ Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he ²⁴ had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after ²⁵ supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it,

22. Don't you have your own homes? It is plain from *Jude 12* that Paul is not here condemning "eating in the church building." What he condemns is the fact that they split up into groups and so distort the very purpose of the fellowship meal *and the Lord's Supper*. **Despise the church of God.** This causes problems only because our English language uses *church* to mean "the building in which you worship." If you will substitute *group* for *church*, you will get the correct meaning. *Lipscomb* says: "If they had a feast in public, brotherly love for each other would have suggested a common table at which all would have fared alike, and as a consequence those without food at home would have had their wants supplied. The course pursued caused shame to the poor and left them hungry." See note on *verse 33*.

23. For from the Lord. Paul repeats this account of the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) to show that their competitive spirit (*verse 19*) was out of harmony with the holy purpose of this rite. **That I passed on to you.** He had told them this while he was at Corinth. **That the Lord Jesus.** He himself founded this rite. **Was betrayed.** Compare *Luke 9:31*. **Took the bread.** Both the bread and the wine commonly used in Passover formed the elements of this new rite.

24. Gave thanks to God. EUCARISTESAS = gave thanks. *Eucharist* is a good Bible word. It appears some fifty-five times in its various forms in the Greek Testament. Applied to the Lord's Supper, it paints a picture of "looking up to Christ in praise and thanksgiving for what He has done!" **This is my body.** Jesus says this as he stands before them. Therefore we take these words as symbolic (see *verse 26*). See notes on *John 6:53-56*. **Which is for you.** See *Heb. 10:20*. **Do this in memory of me.** The Holy Meal (Lord's Supper) is a living memorial to *Christ on the cross!* We should also think of it as a "fellowship meal with CHRIST" in much the same sense as the meal of *John 21:12-13*. It is also a VICTORY CELEBRATION!

25. This cup is God's new covenant. Jesus says this as he stands before them. Therefore we take these words as symbolic (see *verse 26*). **Sealed with my blood.** See *Heb. 9:15*. *MacKnight* says: "Our Lord did not mean, that the new covenant was made at the time he shed his blood; it was made immediately after the fall, on account of the merits of his obedience to the death, which God then considered as accomplished, because it was certainly to be accomplished at the time determined." Compare *Rom. 5:18* and note.

drink it, do it in memory of me." ²⁶For until the Lord comes, you proclaim his death whenever you eat this bread and drink from this cup.

²⁷It follows, then, that if anyone eats the Lord's bread or drinks from his cup in a way that dishonors him, he is guilty of sin against the Lord's body and blood. ²⁸So then, everyone should examine himself first, and then eat the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹For if he does not recognize the meaning of the Lord's body when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgment on himself as he eats and drinks. ³⁰That is why many of you are sick and weak, and several have died. ³¹If we would examine ourselves first, we would not come under God's judgment. ³²But we are judged and punished by the Lord, so that we shall not be condemned together with the world.

in remembrance of me." For ²⁶whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats ²⁷the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ²⁸ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For ²⁹anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many ³⁰among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we ³¹judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the ³²Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

26. For until the Lord comes. Christians are to share in the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) **PERPETUALLY** until Jesus comes and the dead are raised to life! **You proclaim his death.** *Christ on the cross* is the center of Christianity (see note on *1 Cor. 1:23*). The bread symbolizes his body of flesh; the fruit of the grape symbolizes his blood.

27. It follows, then. "Because this is a holy rite." **In a way that dishonors him.** We can do this by: (1) eating it as a *common meal*; (2) eating it as the *bond of a faction* (party, schism); (3) eating it to promote some *wordly purpose*. **He is guilty of sin.** To share in this rite with an *unholy frame of reference* is to profane or blaspheme the Lord's body and blood!

28. Everyone should examine himself first. To be certain that his frame of reference is holy. *MacKnight* says: "First, whether he comes to this service [rite] to keep up the memory of Christ: Secondly, whether he is moved to do so by a grateful sense of Christ's love in dying for men: Thirdly, whether he comes with a firm purpose of doing honor to Christ, by living in all respects conformably to his precepts and example."

29. For if he does not recognize. If he is not aware of the true religious meaning of *Christ on the cross* memorialized in the bread and wine. **He brings judgment on himself.** Punishment. See *verse 30*.

30. That is why. The judgment mentioned in *verse 29*. *MacKnight* and others think that God was bringing physical punishments on them because of their unholy attitude (such as *Acts 5:5*). *Lipscomb* says: "Some commentators have applied the expression to physical disease and death; but spiritual neglect must bring spiritual penalties. Many had grown indifferent and some had lost interest in Christ and their duties to him."

31. If we would examine ourselves first. As sensible people we can each examine ourselves, using God's Word as the *yardstick*. In this way we can correct our own lives and avoid God's judgement.

32. But we are judged and punished. Because God does love us and wants us to succeed in the Christian life, he judges and punishes us in many ways. This certainly sounds like physical punishments (see note on *verse 30*), and we can find a parallel in Paul's own life (*2 Cor. 12:7*). But be careful that you understand this is God's love in action, not his wrath. Compare *Heb. 12:5-11*; *1 Thess. 3:3* and notes. "I know that your rules are righteous, Lord, and that you punished me because you are faithful" (*Psalms 119:75*).

³³So then, my brothers, when you gather together to eat the Lord's meal, wait for one another. ³⁴And if anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that you will not come under God's judgment as you meet together. As for the other matters, I will settle them when I come.

Gifts from the Holy Spirit

12 Now, the matter about the gifts from the Holy Spirit.

I want you to know the truth about them, my brothers. ²You know that while you were still heathen you were controlled by dead idols, who always led you astray. ³You must realize, then, that no one who is led by God's Spirit can

So then, my brothers, ³³ when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If ³⁴ anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.

Spiritual Gifts

12 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you ² were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols. Therefore I tell you ³ that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says,

33. So then, my brothers. *The Lord's meal* includes both the fellowship meal and the Lord's Supper. Although they were separate and distinct from each other, both were holy. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "TO PHAGEIN embraces the entire Church Supper." **Wait for one another.** As soon as they entered the meeting-place with their food, they immediately began to eat it, like diners in a restaurant; and the *rich* (verse 22) ate as fast as they could to avoid sharing with the poor! This means: (1) do not split up into competing groups; (2) the fellowship meal is for fellowship, and is *holy* as it unites the group; (3) you should *unite* in eating the Lord's Supper to *memorialize* Christ. See notes on verses 18 & 22.

34. And if anyone is hungry. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The Church Supper is for good-fellowship, not for bodily need; to eat there like a famished man, absorbed in one's food - if nothing worse happens - is to exclude Christian and religious thoughts." **As for the other matters.** *MacKnight* takes this as other problems about the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal). *Edwards* thinks these were other *different* matters (points of external order?) which could wait until Paul came there in person.

1. The matter about the gifts. Supernormal gifts from the Holy Spirit were needed in the beginning, because: (1) they did not yet have the New Testament to guide them; (2) they were racing against time (*Matt. 24:14*). Many at Corinth took a superstitious view of the "gifts from the Spirit," especially the ability to speak in strange tongues. They viewed these gifts as being similar to those seen in the pagan temples, but with much greater power. [There have always been *counterfeit* gifts and miracles. Compare *Exod. 7:10-12*.] But the biggest problem at Corinth was their *competitive spirit!* Each one said his *gift* was the greatest and tried to seize the glory for himself!! And since *speaking in strange tongues* gave the most opportunity to *show off*, that was the one which everybody wanted!!! Paul's purpose is to: (1) lay down a rule-of-thumb to separate gifts from the Holy Spirit from gifts given by evil spirits (demons); (2) to show the diversity in the gifts from the Spirit.

2. While you were still heathen. The pagans were led by no intelligent, conscious guidance (which the Holy Spirit gives), but by an occult power (*of demons, 1 Cor. 10:19-21*) through the idol. [See introduction to First Corinthians.]

3. A curse on Jesus. This implies that some who claimed to have God's Spirit had said that Jesus was a phony (an impostor) who deserved the death he died. *MacKnight* thinks these might have been Jewish Exorcists (see note on *Acts 19:13*). Probably the pagan priests and priestesses did this. The experiences of their old life had not prepared the Corinthians to understand the workings of God's Spirit. They knew how men could be "carried away" by supernatural influences. They want a criterion, a *yardstick*

say, "A curse on Jesus!", and no one can confess "Jesus is Lord," unless he is guided by the Holy Spirit.

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. ⁵There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. ⁶There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to everyone for their service. ⁷The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each one, for the good of all. ⁸The Spirit gives one man a message of wisdom, while to another man the same Spirit gives a message of knowledge. ⁹One and the same Spirit gives faith to one man, while to another man he gives

"Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Now to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the ability to speak with wisdom, to another the ability to speak with knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to

to test those who claimed inspiration. *A curse on Jesus, Jesus is Lord* are the battle cries of the spirits of error and truth. Only an evil spirit will say *a curse on Jesus*. Only the Holy Spirit leads one to say *Jesus is Lord*. *MacKnight* limits this verse to those who speak under supernatural circumstances. "But a person who only speaks, as a passive instrument, what is supernaturally suggested to him, cannot declare *Jesus Lord*, except the suggestion comes from the Holy Spirit."

4. **There are different kinds.** "Because the spiritual gifts all come from the one Spirit, they are all equally *divine*, even though different."

5. **Different ways of serving.** Each of the *gifts from the Spirit* makes it possible for the one who has them to serve both God and the messianic community. As they *serve*, all who have *gifts from the Spirit* are equal.

6. **Different abilities to perform service.** The same God is the source of authority for each who has the *gifts from the Spirit*, therefore all are equal. The whole point of *verses 4-6* is that (1) there are different gifts; (2) there are different ways of serving; (3) there are different abilities to perform service; (4) but since these things come from the *one* God and the Holy Spirit, all who have these are equally honored by them. No one can feel his gift is more important than all the others.

7. **For the good of all.** No gift from the Spirit is intended to bring glory to the one who has it. The purpose for these gifts is *for the good of all* (compare *Eph. 4:12-13*). [*2 Tim. 1:6* implies that: (1) the spiritual gifts came through the apostles; (2) that each was given only *one* gift. The apostles had all the gifts. In each congregation, the total variety of gifts would be shared by different individuals.] See note on *verse 11*.

8. **The Spirit gives one man.** Remember: the New Testament as we have it did not yet exist. Supernormal gifts were needed to permit the church to grow rapidly. **A message of wisdom.** The commands of Christ. See *Matt. 28:20*. **A message of knowledge.** A complete knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. The true meaning of the Old Testament was given to them, so they could use this to prove the claims of Christ. Compare *1 Pet. 1:10-12*.

9. **Gives faith.** Not the faith which comes through hearing the gospel (*Rom. 10:17*). Faith, as a gift from the Spirit, was: (1) supernatural boldness and courage (*Matt. 10:19-20; Luke 21:15; Acts 4:31; 6:10*); (2) faith which led spiritual men to perform miracles (*Matt. 17:20; 1 Cor. 13:2; 1 Thess. 1:5*). **The power to heal.** The ability to heal diseases was used to authenticate the message of Christ. Compare *Acts 19:11-12* - but notice also those whom Paul did not heal (*2 Tim. 4:10; Phil. 2:25-27; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Cor. 12:7-9*).

the power to heal. ¹⁰The Spirit gives one man the power to work miracles; to another, the gift of speaking God's message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not. To one man he gives the ability to speak in strange tongues, and to another he gives the ability to explain what is said. ¹¹But it is one and the same Spirit who does all this; he gives a different gift to each man, as he wishes.

One Body with Many Parts

¹²Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. ¹³In the same way, all of us, Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free men, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink.

another gifts of healing by 10
that one Spirit, to another
miraculous powers, to an-
other prophecy, to another
the ability to distinguish be-
tween spirits; to another the
ability to speak in different
kinds of tongues, and to still
another the interpretation of
tongues. All these are the 11
work of one and the same
Spirit, and he gives them to
each man, just as he deter-
mines.

One Body, Many Parts

The body is a unit, 12
though it is made up of
many parts; and though all
its parts are many, they
form one body. So it is with
Christ. For we were all bap- 13
tized by one Spirit into one
body—whether Jews or
Greeks, slave or free—and
we were all given the one
Spirit to drink.

10. **The power to work miracles.** MacKnight understands this to be the ability to confer spiritual gifts on others. Only the apostles seem to have had this gift from the Spirit (see *Acts 8:14-17* and notes). **Of speaking God's message.** *Prophecy* = *God's message*. The prophet, under divine control, spoke the message given him (or her) by the Holy Spirit. See *Acts 15:30-32*. Sometimes the prophet told about the future (*Acts 21:10-12*). **To tell the difference.** This gift from the Spirit made it possible to *know* whether someone who claimed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit *actually was!* (Some would claim inspiration just to get glory for themselves.) Also, this gift from the Spirit made it possible to *know* which messages were true, and which were false. Not having the New testament, they needed a miraculous way to *check up* on the things that were said. **To speak in strange tongues.** By means of this gift, preachers could go into a foreign country and *immediately* speak the local language like a native. Compare *Acts 2:4-11* and notes. **The ability to explain.** This served as a check on those who spoke in strange tongues, because they could translate and verify the things which had been said. Also, they could translate the Scriptures from the *strange tongues* of Hebrew and Greek into their own languages.

11. **But it is one and the same Spirit.** These gifts, though different, came from the ONE Spirit. Each gift was necessary to *build up* the body of Christ. Each gift conferred equal honor. No one had any right to boast that his (or her) gift made them more spiritual and holy than other people. [ἑκαστὸ = *each* (man and woman).] **As he wishes.** The Spirit deals with each one receiving a gift on an individual basis. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that it is the Holy Spirit himself who makes the choice to give or withhold each spiritual gift. Compare *verse 7*.

12. **Christ is like a single body.** Paul uses the example of the human body to show the nature of Christ (and his church). The point is *variety in unity*. Diversification of function makes possible human life. The unity of the Church is the *oneness* of a living organism where each individual has his or her own *unique* function. No one has any right to be jealous of what anyone else can do; and without this *ONE*, the body is not complete.

13. **In the same way.** That the body is the sum of all the parts. **Have been baptized into the one body.** The point is, that in spite of our differences of race, nationality, and social status, we all become *ONE* in Christ. **By the same Spirit.** See notes on *John 3:5-7*. **The one Spirit to drink.** God's gift, the Holy Spirit, which *every* Christian *drinks in*. See *Acts 2:38; 5:32* and notes.

¹⁴For the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. ¹⁵If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand, I don't belong to the body," that would not make it stop being a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I don't belong to the body," that would not make it stop being a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell? ¹⁸As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wished.

¹⁹There would not be a body if it were all only one part! ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, and one body.

²¹So then, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" Nor can the head say to the feet, "Well, I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, we cannot do without the parts of the body that

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

14. For the body itself. The human body is made up of many different parts, with different abilities and different functions.

15. If the foot were to say. If the foot complains because it must walk in the dust and dirt, it doesn't *change* anything because it grumbles.

16. And if the ear were to say. Again complaining doesn't *change* anything, because the *fact* of its function is still the same! [Bengelius thinks the *foot* symbolizes the common people in the church; the *hand*, the leaders; the *eyes*, the teachers; and the *ears*, the learners.]

17. If the whole body. Paul shows how absurd their jealousy of each other is, by showing what would happen to the human body if the subordinate parts were omitted.

18. God put every different part. In both the human body and the Church, God assigns function to each part for the good of the whole.

19. There would not be a body. It is only because of the different functions of each part, that the *body* can be a body.

20. As it is. "Facts are stubborn things!" Paul firmly states: there are many parts, and one body. Compare *1 Cor. 10:17* and note. The happiness of the *one body* results from the existence of all its parts.

21. So then! The hands need the guidance of the eye, and the eye needs the help of the hands. Every member of the *body* has his or her place and is *needed* by every other member of the body. And it is also true that Christ the *head* needs every *member* of his Church. This also includes the *weak* member and *bad* member because in reacting to them and disciplining them, the good members are *built up* and *matured*.

22. We cannot do without. In our human bodies, the brain, lungs, and intestines are easily injured, but we could more easily get along without an arm, leg, or eye, than one of these.

seem to be weaker; ²³and those parts that we think aren't worth very much are the ones which we treat with greater care; while the parts of the body which don't look very nice receive special attention, ²⁴which the more beautiful parts of our body do not need. God himself has put the body together in such a way as to give greater honor to those parts that lack it. ²⁵And so there is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern for one another. ²⁶If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.

²⁷All of you, then, are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. ²⁸In the church, then, God has put all in place: in the first place, apostles, in the second place, prophets, and in the third place, teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal, or to help others, or to direct them, or to

and the parts that we think ²³are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unrepresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part ²⁶suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of ²⁷Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of

23. Aren't worth very much. Certain parts of our bodies we hide from sight. **Which don't look very nice.** The generative organs.

24. Which the more beautiful parts. We beautify our bodies by covering up certain parts and decorating others with items of clothing. But our head, face, and hands don't need such coverings. The point is that the strong members of the church ought to work for the good of the weak, and the weak should get rid of all jealousy and envy, to work for the good of the strong. When you help the other person, you are helping yourself, since you are part of the *body*. **God himself.** This strong statement of God's work in structuring the physical organs of the human body was (and is) necessary when many thought matter was totally evil and looked at physical needs as degrading. Compare *1 Tim. 4:3; Col. 2:23; 1 Cor. 6:13; 7:3-5.*

25-26. And so there is no division in the body. The physical body becomes both a symbol of and a basis for the spiritual group. *Chrysostom* writes: "When the head is crowned, the whole man feels itself glorified; when the mouth speaks, the eyes laugh and are filled with gladness."

27. Are Christ's body. "By your baptism into union with Christ, you become part of the **ONE** church or body, of which Christ is the head, soul, and ruler; and considers things done to parts of that body as done to himself."

28. In the church, then. Nine spiritual gifts were named; nine positions in the church are now given. **God has put all in place.** Compare *verse 18. Apostles.* The Twelve, plus Paul. From them all must receive the knowledge of the gospel. They have no *replacements*, and even though dead, they still speak to us through the New Testament writings. **Prophets.** Who spoke God's message by inspiration (see note on *verse 10*). **Teachers.** Who had the gift from the Spirit to teach God's Truth. **Miracles.** Who confirm the gospel by means of miracles. **To heal diseases. To help.** Compare *Acts 4:36; 9:27*. Spiritual ability to encourage and to help others. **To direct.** The spiritual ability to *organize*. This might be the church-elders (leaders), or one who has the gift of being able to *tell the difference* (see *verse 10*). **To speak in strange tongues.** This is last on the list, but the Corinthians rated it the highest. See note on *verse 10*. All Paul mentions here have the spiritual gifts. Compare *Eph. 4:11*.

speaking in strange tongues. ²⁹They are not all apostles, or prophets, or teachers. Not all have the power to work miracles, ³⁰or to heal diseases, or to speak in strange tongues, or to explain what is said. ³¹Set your hearts, then, on the more important gifts.

Best of all, however, is the following way.

Love

13 I may be able to speak the languages of men and even of angels, but if I have not love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell. ²I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains—but if I have not love, I am nothing. ³I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned—but if I have not love, it does me no good.

administration, and finally those speaking in different kinds of tongues. All are ²⁹apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have ³⁰gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire ³¹the greater gifts.

Love

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

13 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I ²have the gift of prophecy, and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give ³all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

29-30. **They are not all.** Paul once again shows the wide variety of abilities, and the fact that each has his own special part to play in the *body*.

31. **On the more important gifts.** "Even though God has put all in place, we should eagerly desire the more important gifts. We should not be content to *speak in strange tongues*, when we could *speak God's message*, etc." **Best of all, however.** "The gifts from the Spirit are good, but there is something even better than them!"

Chapter 13. LOVE Love is the route to spiritual power in the church!!! Paul shows us that all talents, all gifts from the Spirit, all sacrifices - have no meaning at all UNLESS they are qualified (authenticated) by LOVE!!!

1. **To speak the languages.** The Corinthians thought the ability to speak in *strange tongues* was God's greatest gift to them. If Paul can speak every human language and even speak the language of angels, but has no love, this is worthless! Without love, the *strange tongues* are only senseless noise (such as the gong and bell which did not make a musical tone). Compare *1 Cor. 14:6-11, 23, 27, 28*.

2. **Inspired preaching** = prophecy. See note on *1 Cor. 12:10*. **All knowledge.** The secrets of the Old Testament. See note on *1 Cor. 12:8*. **Faith.** See note on *1 Cor. 12:9*. **But if I have not love.** Then I am nothing, either in the sight of God or man!

3. **I may give away.** [The NIV adds: *to the poor* - which is implied.] **Even give up my body.** To be burned for my religion. The language of this comes from *Dan. 3:28*. It points to those Christians who would die rather than turn away from Christ **But if I have not love.** "If I am not motivated by love in this action, it does me no good, because I will be only a hypocrite!"

⁴Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous, or conceited, or proud; ⁵love is not ill-mannered, or selfish, or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; ⁶love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. ⁷Love never gives up: its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

⁸Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. ⁹For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; ¹⁰but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when 10 perfection comes, the im-

4. **Love is patient and kind.** Love is the *grace* which makes men most like (similar to) God. Love best prepares men to live with God in Eternity. *Milton* writes: "[love is] The golden key which opens [opens] the palace of eternity." Compare *1 John 4:17-18*. One who loves, will be patient and kind to those who do him wrong! **Love is not jealous.** It does not envy the success or blessings which others receive. **Or conceited.** It does not *show off*. **Or proud.** One who envies others, often is arrogantly proud and boastful as a defence. Love does not act this way!

5. **Love is not ill-mannered.** Does not behave in such a way as to shock good manners and morals. Love is polite. **Or selfish.** Selfishness causes irritability. One who centers all his thoughts on himself, will find no place for God. **Or irritable.** Love is not exasperated (does not "fly off the handle") at every little thing! **Does not keep a record.** This means: (1) does not hold grudges; (2) does not take revenge; (3) does not *read evil motives* into everything that people do.

6. **Not happy with evil.** Love is not pleased with the evil others do, even when it results in an advantage to itself. **Is happy with the truth.** Love is pleased by the good which others do, even when it results in a lost opportunity to itself.

7. **Love never gives up.** Even though others fail, or are weak, love does not give up, and also works to help the others. The symbolism in this verse is a *stout-hearted soldier* who helps his buddies toward the common goal. **Faith.** Here it means *faith in others*. Love looks for the best in others, and does not expect the worst. **Hope.** Hopes for the best, rather than fears the worst. **Patience.** Love *puts up with* whatever comes its way and stands firm. **Never fall.** Like a good soldier or a successful athlete, Love doesn't quit until the prize is in hand!

8. **Love is eternal.** That is, love does not terminate at some predetermined point. Paul shows us the *gifts from the Spirit* will terminate at some time. **Inspired messages** (prophecies) are temporary. **Gifts of speaking** (tongues) will cease. **Knowledge** (gifts of knowledge) will pass.

9. **Are only partial.** Our gifts are limited by the limitations placed on them. Compare *1 Pet. 1:10-11* for an example of this.

10. **But when what is perfect comes.** Most scholars believe the *perfect* will come with the *Second Coming* of Christ and our entrance into that eternal world. So Johnson, MacKnight, Expositor's Greek Testament, et. al. Paul's statement in *verse 12* points to this. But Lipscomb, et. al, take the completion of the New Testament (or the coming to maturity of the church) as the time when the *partial* will disappear. Some think the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) was the cut-off point for the gifts from the Spirit.

¹¹When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways.

¹²What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be as complete, as God's knowledge of me.

¹³Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.

More about Gifts from the Spirit

14 It is love, then, that you should strive for. Set your hearts on spiritual gifts, especially

perfect disappears. When I ¹¹ was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor ¹² reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three ¹³ remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues

14 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the

11. **When I was a child.** This verse illustrates the partial disappearing as the perfect comes. As a child, his thinking, feelings, and speech were all childishly imperfect. With manhood, his need or use of the childish terminates. [The childish is needed, because it involves growth.]

12. **Like the dim image in a mirror.** This is another example. Mirrors then were polished metal, and gave only a dim reflection. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "Divine revelation opens up fresh mysteries; advanced knowledge raises vaster problems. With our defective earthly powers, this is inevitable." **Then we shall see face to face.** *MacKnight* says: "*but in the life to come we shall see them face to face, clearly.* But *Lipscomb* says: "While in the state of childhood, with only the partial knowledge made known through the spiritually gifted, they saw as in a mirror darkly; but when the perfect revelation should be made known, they would know the things revealed through all. So that the knowledge we possess through the completed will of God is greatly more than any one of the gifted or inspired ones possessed, since the revelations made to and through all are given in the Scriptures." **What I know now is only partial.** Since Paul is an inspired apostle as he says this (*John 14:26; Gal. 1:15-17*), he would already know all the Truth taught in the New Testament, even though he does not understand everything. **Then it will be complete.** When the curtain of our *humanity* is taken away, and the full revelation has come in the presence of Christ. **As God's knowledge of me.** There are no limitations on God's knowledge!! Compare what Paul says in *Gal. 4:9*. In all this Paul shows us that the gifts from the Spirit, although very valuable, are temporary and will not survive this present world. But *love* is permanent, and will never terminate!!! Love is **BEST OF ALL** (*1 Cor. 12:31*).

13. **Meanwhile these three remain.** These three are eternal. They, along with the church, will never terminate, but will extend on into eternity. **The greatest of these is love.** It is the greatest because it is the one quality that is *divine*. "God is love." It *authenticates* both faith and hope. [*MacKnight* thinks that faith, hope, and love are necessary for our present existence, but that only love will survive this world. He sees faith terminating as it becomes *sight*, and hope terminating as it is *fulfilled*. Therefore, love is greatest because it alone will exist in eternity.]

1. **It is love then.** Love is the "best of all," even greater than faith and hope! The Greek paints a picture of "hunters in the chase." "Strive for love with every means in your power!!!" Yet love does not replace the spiritual gifts. **Set your hearts.** Striving for love does not mean forgetting everything else. But love opens the true way to everything else! As Paul said in *1 Cor. 12:31*: "*Set your hearts, then, on the more important gifts.*" **The gift of speaking God's message.** Because we use "prophecy" to mean "predicting the future," it is not the best word of translation. To *prophecy* is to speak God's message by inspiration.

the gift of speaking God's message. ²The one who speaks in strange tongues does not speak to men but to God, because no one understands him. He is speaking secret truths by the power of the Spirit. ³But the one who speaks God's message speaks to men, and gives them help, encouragement, and comfort. ⁴The man who speaks in strange tongues helps only himself, but the one who speaks God's message helps the whole church.

⁵I would like for all of you to speak in strange tongues; but I would rather that all of you had the gift of speaking God's message. For the man who speaks God's message is of greater value than the one who speaks in strange tongues—unless there is someone present who can explain what he says, so that the whole church may be

gift of prophecy. For anyone ² who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But ³ everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who ⁴ speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I ⁵ would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

2. **In strange tongues.** Because the gift of languages gave the most chance to *show off*, the Corinthians rated it the highest. Because they considered this gift the most honored, those who had it would *show off* in the public meetings by speaking long and loud in foreign languages (strange tongues). Others who were much better qualified to *instruct* the group were forced to *remain silent*. Sometimes many would speak in strange tongues at the same time, trying to shout down the others, creating confusion. **Does not speak to men.** No one could understand what they were saying. **He is speaking secret truths.** It was by the Holy Spirit's power that he spoke. Therefore, what he said was inspired, even though it did not benefit those who heard it.

3. **Who speaks God's message.** When Peter preached on Pentecost (*Acts 2*), he spoke God's message. This was done in understandable language. Those who heard, were taught by it. **Help.** To make their faith stronger. **Encouragement.** To stir them up to spiritual activity. **Comfort.** To help them endure the problems of life.

4. **Helps only himself.** Speaking in strange tongues made this person feel close to God and gave him a sense of power (compare *2 Cor. 12:1-10*). **Helps the whole church.** By speaking God's message in a form which they can understand. This also included inspired prayer (*verse 14*) and inspired singing (*verse 15, 26*).

5. **To speak in strange tongues.** The tongues were a real and desirable gift. Paul could wish that each one had this gift. **But I would rather.** Better is superior to good. The gift of speaking God's message (prophecy) serves the church better. **Is of greater value.** Because it communicates instruction. **Unless.** If someone there can translate it into understandable form, it then becomes useful. **Note.** There is much confusion about tongues (languages). Some think they were "ecstatic speech" in no language at all. Others think they were gifts of the knowledge of languages. (1) We see these at work on Pentecost (*Acts 2:5-13*). (2) The one who spoke in tongues did not understand what he was saying (*verses 13-14*). So it could not be just a gift of knowledge. (3) They were intended as proof for unbelievers, but only for those unbelievers who spoke the tongue (*verse 23*).

helped. ⁶So when I come to you, brothers, what use will I be to you if I speak in strange tongues? Not a bit, unless I bring you some revelation from God, or some knowledge, or some inspired message, or some teaching.

⁷Even such lifeless musical instruments as the flute and the harp—how will anyone know the tune that is being played unless the notes are sounded distinctly? ⁸And if the man who plays the bugle does not sound a clear call, who will prepare for battle? ⁹In the same way, how will anyone understand what you are talking about if your message by means of strange tongues is not clear? Your words will vanish in the air! ¹⁰There are many different languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. ¹¹But if I do not know the language being spoken, the man who uses it will be a foreigner to me and I will be a foreigner to him. ¹²Since you are eager to have the gifts of the Spirit, above everything else you must try to make greater use of those which help build up the church.

Now, brothers, if I come ⁶ to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? Even ⁷ in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what time is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? A- ⁸ gain, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking in- ¹⁰ to the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not ¹¹ grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you ¹² are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

6. **So when I come to you.** The gift of strange tongues, has no value when used in the public meetings, *unless*: (1) it brings a revelation from God; (2) it brings some knowledge; (3) it brings some inspired message; (4) it brings some teaching. But this could not be done unless they were made to understand what was being said.

7. **Even such lifeless.** Such things as the flute or harp must sound the notes distinctly to communicate the tune being played. What Paul says here may be directed mostly toward "ecstatic speech" which is gibberish.

8. **The bugle.** Armies in all ages have been directed by the sound of a bugle. But the loudest blast means nothing, if it does not *communicate* something which the hearers can understand!

9. **In the same way.** The most important message from God will mean nothing if it is spoken in a strange tongue which no one can understand, not even the one who speaks it. This also applies to "old fashioned church language" when it is spoken to those who cannot understand it.

10. **Many different languages.** The Bible has been translated into more than 1,500 different languages!!! **Yet none of them is without meaning.** Each of them is used for the purpose of **COMMUNICATING** with others!

11. **But if I do not know the language.** Anyone who has tried to communicate across the *language barrier* will understand what Paul is saying.

12. **Since you are eager.** It was proper for them to be eager for the gifts from the Spirit (*verse 1*). **Which help build up the church.** This is the key to the use of spiritual gifts. The Corinthians were more interested in *showing off*, and so were misusing the gifts from the Holy Spirit. See note on *1 Cor. 12:1*.

¹³The man who speaks in strange tongues, then, must pray for the gift to explain what he says. ¹⁴For if I pray in this way, my spirit prays indeed, but my mind has no part in it. ¹⁵What should I do, then? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray also with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will sing also with my mind. ¹⁶When you give thanks to God in spirit only, how can an ordinary man taking part in the meeting say "Amen" to your prayer of thanksgiving? He has no way of knowing what you are saying. ¹⁷Even if your prayer of thanks to God is quite good, the other man is not helped at all.

¹⁸I thank God that I speak in strange tongues much more than any of you. ¹⁹But in church worship I would rather speak five words that can be understood, in order to teach others, than speak thousands of words in strange tongues.

For this reason the man 13
who speaks in a tongue
should pray that he may in-
terpret what he says. For if I 14
pray in a tongue, my spirit
prays, but my mind is un-
fruitful. So what shall I do? 15
I will pray with my spirit,
but I will also pray with my
mind; I will sing with my
spirit, but I will also sing
with my mind. If you are 16
praising God with your
spirit, how can one who
finds himself among those
who do not understand say
"Amen" to your thanksgiv-
ing, since he does not know
what you are saying? You 17
may be giving thanks well
enough, but the other man
is not edified.

I thank God that I speak 18
in tongues more than all of
you. But in the church I 19
would rather speak five in-
telligible words to instruct
others than ten thousand
words in a tongue.

13. **For the gift to explain.** This implies more than one gift was possible. *Lipscomb* says: "Let him pray that he may have the gift of interpreting what he says in the tongue, else he will not profit those who hear." *MacKnight* ties it in with *verse 14*. "For which cause, let him who by inspiration prayeth in the church in a foreign language, pray in such a manner, and at such a time, as some one who is inspired may interpret his prayer to the edification of the church."

14. **For if I pray in this way.** Paul shows that for worship to be helpful, and for a sane and sound church life, the *mind* must work together with the energies of the (human) *spirit*. In a sense, these next few verses counterbalance what he said in *1 Cor. 1:18 to 2:5*. Paul is completely opposed to a blind fanaticism or irrational mysticism. It is tragic that some think of faith as: "something you believe, even though you know it isn't so." Paul is saying: "If the Holy Spirit working on my spirit makes it possible for me to pray in a strange tongue, my spirit does pray, but my mind has no part in it (because it does not understand what is being said)."

15. **What should I do, then?** Both his spirit and his mind will join together by using a known language. *Lipscomb* says: "The thought evidently is: 'I will sing as the Spirit directs or inspires, and I will sing in a language that those who hear can understand.' This expression is often quoted in connection with song service in a sense in which it was not used."

16. **How can an ordinary man?** This shows: (1) it was *standard practice* for the people in a public meeting of the church to say "Amen!"; (2) there were ordinary members who did not have the gifts from the Spirit.

17. **The other man is not helped at all.** By Paul's "rule of thumb," the beautiful abstract must take second place to the practical.

18. **I speak in strange tongues.** Even at Corinth where this gift of tongues was widespread, Paul could still *outdo* them! What he said about tongues was not out of jealousy!

19. **But in church worship.** [The church is the people. Church worship is the public meeting.] **Five words.** This is Paul's scale of values. Five words that teach others are more valuable than thousands of words in strange tongues!!!

²⁰Do not be like children in your thinking, brothers; be children so far as evil is concerned, but be mature in your thinking. ²¹In the Scriptures it is written,

"By means of men of strange languages
I will speak to this people, says the
Lord.

I will speak through lips of foreigners,
but even then they will not listen to
me."

²²So then, the gift of speaking in strange tongues is proof for unbelievers, not for believers, while the gift of speaking God's message is proof for believers, not for unbelievers.

²³If, then, the whole church meets together and everyone starts speaking in strange tongues—if some ordinary people or unbelievers come in, won't they say that you are all crazy? ²⁴But if all speak God's message, when some unbeliever or ordinary person comes in he will be convinced of his sin by what he hears. He will

Brothers, stop thinking ²⁰ like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. In the ²¹ Law it is written:

"Through men of strange
tongues
and through the lips of
foreigners

I will speak to this people,
but even then they will
not listen to me,"

says the Lord.

Tongues, then, are a sign, ²² not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. So if the whole ²³ church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever ²⁴ or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be

20. Do not be like children. The "competitive spirit" and the desire to "show off" are *childlike*. So far as evil is concerned. Little children are "innocent" in many ways. Compare *Matt. 18:1-5*. But be mature. Compare *1 Cor. 2:6; 8:9-11*.

21. In the Scriptures. Paul paraphrases *Isa. 28:11-12* to make a strong statement about the inferiority of strange tongues (glossolalia). Compare *1 Cor. 1:19; 2:9; 3:19*. The context of this quotation is "drunken Israelites mocking God's message as spoken by the prophet, as though it were only suitable for little children. In anger, God says he will give his lessons to them through the lips of foreign conquerors." The strange tongues in this quotation would be *punishment*. The strange tongues may serve a similar sad purpose in the church. In other words, strange tongues were not to be understood as evidence of God's special favor.

22. Is proof for unbelievers. This is the real point of the quotation in *verse 21*. Those who will not be taught by God through understandable language, will become fixed in their unbelief and even justified, by the speaking in strange tongues. [*Lipscomb*, et. al., takes this to be a proof to unbelievers in the sense of *Acts 2:5-13*. But Paul wants to restrain, rather than stimulate, the use of strange tongues at Corinth.]

23. Won't they say that you are all crazy? "If strange tongues are the supreme gift from the Spirit, then to have the whole church speaking in these at the same time ought to be the very peak of spiritual power. But in fact, the church then would be like a group of crazy people!"

24. But if all speak God's message. This gift: (1) helps the church (*verses 3-5*); (2) uses the mind (*verses 14-19*); (3) can be safely done by the entire church; (4) will convince sinners. That "all" should speak God's message is a part of the Messianic ideal (compare *Rev. 1:6*).

be judged by all he hears, ²⁵his secret thoughts will be brought into the open, and he will bow down and worship God, confessing, "Truly God is here with you!"

judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

Order in the Church

²⁶What do I mean, my brothers? When you meet for worship, one man has a hymn, another a teaching, another a revelation from God, another a message in strange tongues, and still another the explanation of what is said. Everything must be of help to the church. ²⁷If someone is going to speak in strange tongues, two or three at the most should speak, one after the other, and someone else must explain what is being said. ²⁸But if no one is there who can explain, then the one who speaks in strange tongues must be quiet in the meeting, and speak only to himself and to God. ²⁹Two or three who are given God's message should speak, while the others judge what they say. ³⁰But if someone sitting in the meeting receives a message from God, the

Orderly Worship

What then shall we say, ²⁶brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a ²⁷tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.

Two or three prophets ²⁹should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation ³⁰comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker

25. **And worship God.** When he hears God's Truth, and measures his life by it, his secret thought will be brought out into the open (to himself). As he sees "Christ on the cross," he will bow down and worship God!

26. **What do I mean?** Paul looks at the *use* of gifts from the Spirit, as this relates to the church meetings. **When you meet for worship.** Compare *1 Cor. 11:18-20*. Each one tried to *get ahead* of the other. **One man has a hymn.** This implies they were all trying to speak at once! **Must be of help.** This is the key! Help, not compete!

27. **Two or three at the most.** This can mean: (1) not more than two or three who are given God's message by the Spirit, should speak at any one meeting (*verse 29*). Most take this view. (2) Those who speak in strange tongues should speak two or three sentences at the most, and then someone else explain what they said. MacKnight takes this view. (3) That two or three *sing* together as a choir. T. C. Edwards takes this view.

28. **But if no one is there who can explain.** In such a case, those who speak in strange tongues are to keep quiet. This, of course, applies to their speaking in tongues, not to the other parts of the worship.

29. **While the others judge.** Those who had the ability to "tell the difference" (*1 Cor. 12:10 note*) would be best able to do this, but *others* could include every prophet there except the ones speaking. *F. I. Stanley* brings up two important things: (1) "Paul does not discriminate between the prophets. He knew that there were both men and women prophets in the church, and that God had said, 'Sons and daughters shall prophesy.'" [See note on *Acts 2:17*.] (2) "Those prophets were to the church then as our Bible is to us today. A false prophet with a false message then could have done much harm to the church. Therefore, when prophecy was given in the church, it was screened by other prophets."

30. **But if someone.** The question is: Who is to decide this??? The answer must be: The other prophets who judge (*verse 29*). They are to preserve order in the meeting.

one who is speaking should stop. ³¹All of you may speak God's message, one by one, so that all will learn and be encouraged. ³²The gift of speaking God's message should be under the speaker's control, ³³because God has not called us to be disorderly, but peaceful.

As in all the churches of God's people, ³⁴the women should keep quiet in the church meetings. They are not allowed to speak; as the Jewish Law says, they must not be in charge. ³⁵If they want to find out about something, they should ask their husbands at home. It is a disgraceful thing for a woman to speak in a church meeting.

should stop. For you can all ³¹ prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits ³² of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For ³³ God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

As in all the congregations of the saints, women ³⁴ should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire ³⁵ about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to

31. **All of you.** Those who speak God's message (verse 29). **One by one.** Only one speaking at a time. [All the prophets would have their turn, but only two or three at any one meeting. The "best speakers" would not be allowed to suppress the others.]

32. **Under the speaker's control.** Verse 31 tells why the speakers must submit to regulation. "So that all will learn and be encouraged." This verse tells how that is possible. One proof of the Holy Spirit's gift, is the ability to control it. The *unruly prophet* is not genuine. This means, then, that the *speakers* can be directed by those who *judge*.

33. **Because God.** *Disorder* is contrary to God. Rather than being *unruly*, one who speaks God's message must be peaceful.

34. **The women should keep quiet.** Which women??? Paul is dealing with the gift of speaking God's message. Then *the women* of this verse must be *prophetesses*. F. I. Stanley says: "He is speaking of what prophets are doing, and not of marriage! He has no thought about men and their wives, but about men and women who are to prophesy (Joel 2:28-30; Acts 2:17)." SIGATOO = *quiet*. This same word appears in verse 28, and is translated *should stop* in verse 30. It means not so much as a sigh or a grunt. We can see in verse 28 this silence applied to the use of a spiritual gift. Here, then, it must also be a specific silence on a specific thing. If it were not, women would not be allowed to sing a note or to speak a word of any kind in a church meeting! The next verse tells us what this specific silence is about.

35. **If they want to find out about something.** "We see two or three who speak God's message, and others who judge what is said (verse 29). We see one of the "judges" rebuke one who "speaks," but we do not know why. It would waste valuable time for the judges to stop and explain. Those who have the gift "to tell the difference" (1 Cor. 12:10 note) have the authority to do this, and we are not to worry about it." (1) The women who belong to this context have the gift of prophecy (to speak God's message by inspiration). (2) They do not have the authority to judge those who speak. (3) If they want to find out something about what the "judges" have done, they can ask at home. Women are to learn and be encouraged in the church meeting (verse 31), which proves that this verse speaks of something specific. **It is a disgraceful thing.** Notice Paul's choice of words. What he is saying, then, is: "It is disgraceful for a prophetess to *judge* a speaking prophet in the church meeting, or to interrupt the church meeting by asking questions." F. I. Stanley writes: "It now becomes apparent that this scripture does not contradict such verses as 1 Cor. 14:3-4; 11:4-5; Acts 21:9; Phil. 4:2-3; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:14-16, and a host of other scriptures, but rather complements them, and gives a woman her place in the church, by the side of man, and in subordination to him." [This whole subject is carefully examined in C. R. Nichol's book, *God's Woman*.]

³⁶Or could it be that the word of God came from you? Or are you the only ones to whom it came? ³⁷If anyone supposes he is God's messenger or has a spiritual gift, he must realize that what I am writing you is the Lord's command. ³⁸But if he does not pay attention to this, pay no attention to him.

³⁹So then, my brothers, set your heart on speaking God's message, but do not forbid the speaking in strange tongues. ⁴⁰Everything must be done in a proper and orderly way.

The Resurrection of Christ

15 And now I want to remind you, brothers, of the Good News which I preached to you, which you received, and on which your faith

36 speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?

37 If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he 38 ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

39 Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything 40 should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

The Resurrection of Christ

15 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your

36. **Or could it be?** The Corinthians acted without thinking of anyone but themselves, as though they were the only church in the world, and that they ought to set the example for everyone else. *MacKnight* thinks it means: "What? Went the word of God forth into the world from you women? Did Christ employ any of your sex as apostles? Or did the word only come to you by the ministry of men? How then can you pretend to teach men?" But we must also consider Miriam, the first prophetess (*Exod. 15:20*), Deborah, a prophetess who judged Israel (*Judges 4:4*), Huldah, the prophetess, who taught men (*2 Chron. 34:22-23*), Phillip's daughters (*Acts 21:9*), et. al.

37. **He must realize.** Paul was an inspired apostle. Whoever claims to have the gifts from the Spirit, and does not pay attention to the New Testament commands, proves himself to be a phony!

38. **But if he does not pay attention.** The one who proves himself a phony is to be ignored! Notice what Christ said in *Matt. 7:22-23*.

39. **So then, my brothers.** "Speaking God's message is still the most important of the gifts, but strange tongues have their place also."

40. **In a proper and orderly way.** "These who have spiritual gifts must not fight and quarrel and try to outdo each other; and the women prophets must not judge the speakers or interrupt the worship with questions."

The Resurrection. The Greeks viewed the *body* as the "prison of the soul," and expected their happiness to come by being freed from the body forever by death. The false teacher, to please the Greeks, denied the raising from death of the body; taught that the only resurrection Christ promised was a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin; and taught that this resurrection was already past (*2 Tim. 2:18*). It does make a difference whether we think the *body* is a "prison of the soul," or a "temple of the Holy Spirit" (*1 Cor. 6:19*). Paul taught that man himself is a *trinity* (*1 Thess. 5:23*), and showed the raising from death of the *body* is one of the great Christian doctrines (*Acts 17:18, 31-32*). In this chapter he examines the raising of Christ from death, and how this relates to the raising of the dead.

1. **And now I want to remind you.** "Since some of you destroy the Good News by saying the dead are not raised to life, I repeat to you some things which I told you when I was at Corinth."

stands firm. ²That is the gospel, the message that I preached to you. You are saved by the gospel if you hold firmly to it—unless it was for nothing that you believed.

³I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance; that Christ died for sins, as written in the Scriptures; ⁴that he was buried, and was raised to life on the third day, as written in the Scriptures; ⁵that he appeared to Peter, and then to all twelve apostles. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles.

⁸Last of all he appeared also to me—even though I am like one who was born in a most

stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

2. **You are saved by the gospel.** Compare *2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:22*. **Unless it was for nothing.** "Unless you were only acting on impulse and didn't really understand what it was all about." [For the nature of *faith*, see note on *James 2:19*.]

3. **I passed on to you what I received.** Compare *1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:12*. This is the Lord's message and not just something that Paul "made up." **Of the greatest importance.** Christianity looks back to an ACR IN HISTORY! The whole Christian system stands or falls on this point: "CHRIST ON THE CROSS!" Compare *verse 14*; and note on *1 Cor. 1:23*. **That Christ died for our sins.** *Isaiah 53:5-6* predicted this. See notes on *Rom. 8:1-4*. It is God's act in Christ, EXTRINSIC to ourself, which is the source of our salvation.

⁴**That he was buried.** As one who was known to be actually dead. See *John 19:33-35*. **And was raised to life on the third day.** Compare *verse 14*. This is very important, because if Jesus did not raise from death, there is no message of salvation!!! The prophets predicted this raising from death (*Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:31*). [*Third day*: see note on *Matt. 12:40*.]

5. **That he appeared to Peter.** "To prove to you the truth of Jesus raising from death, I tell you that he appeared to Peter in bodily form." [Jesus first appeared to a woman, Mary Magdalene. A complete list of appearances is in the notes on *Matt. 28:9*.]

6. **To more than five hundred.** None of the Gospels mention this, but MacKnight thinks *Matt. 28:10* hints at it. It probably took place in Galilee (Johnson thinks so), but it could have been while they were all still at Jerusalem. **Most of whom were still alive.** "They are eyewitnesses of all that happened, and the fact that most of them are still living makes it easy to check what I say." Paul had no doubt seen and talked with some of these *five hundred*.

⁷**Then he appeared to James.** The Gospels do not mention this. This James is the Lord's human brother (see notes on *Acts 15:13; 21:18*). **Then to all the apostles.** *Acts 1:6-9*.

8. **Last of all.** Paul did not see Jesus until the incident in *Acts 9:4*. **Born in a most unusual way.** EKTROMA is a sudden, violent birth, not like the usual order of things. Paul uses it symbolically, because his *experience* was so strange!

unusual way. ⁹For I am the least of all the apostles—I do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted God's church. ¹⁰But by God's grace I am what I am, and the grace that he gave me was not without effect. On the contrary, I have worked harder than all the other apostles, although it was not really my own doing, but God's grace working with me. ¹¹So then, whether it came from me or from them, this is what we all preach, this is what you believe.

Our Resurrection

¹²Now, since our message is that Christ has been raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? ¹³If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; ¹⁴and if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe. ¹⁵More than that, we are shown to be lying against God, because we said of him that he raised Christ from death—but he did not raise him, if it is true that the dead are

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If 13 there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And 14 if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than 15 that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the

9. **For I am the least.** That is, by human standards, because he persecuted the church. *Schmiedel* thinks that *TO EXTROMA* was one of the insulting names pinned on Paul by the *circumcision party*; and that he takes this as his title and gives it a new meaning. Paul probably repeats their charge in a sense of *irony*. But it is also true that he never forgot that he had once persecuted Christ's church (even though he knew he had been forgiven). Compare *Acts 26:9-11*; *Gal. 1:13*; *1 Tim. 1:13-16*.

10. **But by God's grace.** The *circumcision party* may not consider Paul an apostle, but he is - by God's grace!!! "Grace" is used in three different senses in this verse: (1) the *grace* that saved him (*Eph. 2:8*); (2) the *grace* that appointed him an apostle; (3) the *grace* that made it possible to outwork all the other apostles.

11. **Whether it came from me or from them.** "It makes no difference whether it is Peter, the Twelve, James (see note on *Gal. 2:12*), or me, our gospels the same! We all preach that Jesus raised from death!!! This is what you believed when we led you to Christ."

12. **Now, since our message.** "Since all the apostles including me preach that Christ has been raised from death and that his resurrection is a proof of yours, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life?"

13. **If that is true.** "If you say none of the dead will be raised to life, you are also saying that Christ was not raised from death!" Compare note on *Acts 4:2*.

14. **And if Christ.** "If Christ was not raised from death, then all of us (*verse 11*) are telling a lie. And if we are telling a lie, then there is no Good News."

15. **Lying against God.** "We said that God raised Christ from death! If Christ did not raise from the dead, then we become guilty of lying against God himself!!!"

not raised to life. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion and you are still lost in your sins. ¹⁸It would also mean that the believers in Christ who have died are lost. ¹⁹If our hope in Christ is good for this life only, and no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world.

²⁰But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised. ²¹For just as death came by means of a man, in the same way the rising from death comes by means of a man. ²²For just as all men die because of their union to Adam, in the same way all will be raised to life

dead are not raised. For if 16
the dead are not raised, then
Christ has not been raised
either. And if Christ has not 17
been raised, your faith is fu-
tile; you are still in your sins.
Then those also who have 18
fallen asleep in Christ are
lost. If only for this life we 19
have hope in Christ, we are
to be pitied more than all
men.

But Christ has indeed 20
been raised from the dead,
the firstfruits of those who
have fallen asleep. For since 21
death came through a man,
the resurrection of the dead
comes also through a man.
For as in Adam all die, so in 22
Christ all will be made alive.

16. **For if the dead are not raised.** Paul restates what he said in *verse 13*. Note: (1) if the *fact* is untrue, the witness is untrue also (*verses 14-15*); (2) if the *fact* is untrue, the promises are untrue also (*verses 17-18*).

17. **Then your faith is a delusion.** Faith is based on facts! [See note on *James 2:19*.] "If Christ has not been raised (and his body still lies on the Judean hill), then he is not the Savior! This would mean that he is only another dead man who could not even save himself. You are still lost in your sins, because he cannot forgive them - IF HE HAS NOT RAISED TO LIFE!"

18. **It would also mean.** "The believers in Christ who have died, who thought the sting of death was removed and died happy in that belief, were cruelly deceived - if Christ has not raised to life!"

19. **If our hope in Christ.** This means: (1) "If Christ has not been raised, and death truly ends it all, then we Christians who have given up everything hoping to gain eternal life, deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world." (2) "If we apostles hoped to gain something in this life by falsely preaching that Christ raised from death (it would be false if the dead do not raise), then we who have framed and preached this falsehood while knowing it to be false, deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world (because of the agony we brought on ourselves by this, *1 Cor. 4:9-13*)."

20. **But the truth is.** In contrast to all the bad things that would come if Christ were still in the grave, he now shows us the TRUTH! **Christ has been raised from death.** "Your faith is not a delusion! Your sins are forgiven!" **As the guarantee.** The "first-fruit" of the harvest was both an example and a pledge of the future harvest. Christ's resurrection is both an example and a pledge that the dead will raise! The true value of *goodness* is seen in its future reward!!!

21. **For just as death came.** "The raising of the dead through Christ is a reasonable thing. If death came through a man, it is only right that the raising from death should come through a man." What we unconditionally lost through Adam, we unconditionally get back through Christ. See *verse 22*.

22. **For just as all men.** The entire human race came under the sentence of (physical) death because of their union to Adam, their ancestor. In the same way the entire human race will be raised from (physical) death and brought to Judgment because of their union to Christ (the second Adam). This does not say that all will be finally saved, but that all the dead, whether bad or good, will be raised to life again. Compare *John 5:26-29*; *Rev. 1:7*. *Rom. 5:18* is a good explanation of this.

because of their union to Christ. ²³But each one in his proper order: Christ, the first of all; then those who belong to Christ, at the time of his coming. ²⁴Then the end will come; Christ will overcome all spiritual rulers, authorities, and powers, and hand over the Kingdom to God the Father. ²⁵For Christ must rule until God defeats all enemies and puts them under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be defeated will be death. ²⁷For the scripture says, "God put *all* things under his feet." It is clear, of course, that the words "all things" do not include God himself, who puts all things under Christ. ²⁸But when all things have been placed under Christ's rule, then he himself, the Son, will place himself under God, who placed all under him; and God will rule completely over all.

But each in his own turn: ²³ Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end ²⁴ will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he ²⁵ must reign until God has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be ²⁶ destroyed is death. For God: ²⁷ "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When ²⁸ he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

23. But each one in his proper order. This implies the good and the bad will be raised separately, but at the same time. Compare *Rev. 14:13-20* and notes. The Parable of the Weeds (*Matt. 13:24-30*) also applies to this.

24. Then the end will come. The world's history and time itself will terminate as Christ Comes, the dead rise, and Judgment takes place. *Christ will overcome.* He has ALREADY won the victory (see note on *Rev. 20:1-3*), yet he does not completely destroy his enemies until the right time. Compare *verse 26*. **And hand over the Kingdom.** Jesus is now crowned as King (*Heb. 2:9*) in the Kingdom which is called: "all authority in heaven and on earth" (*Matt. 28:18*). Salvation puts us in his Kingdom (*Col. 1:13*). But Christ's mission of "putting men right with God" will terminate at the Coming. With his mission completed, he will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father. Compare *verse 28*.

25. For Christ must rule. He is not fighting a battle to seize a Kingdom, since he has already won the victory (see *Dan. 2:44; Acts 2:16-17*; and read the Introduction to Acts). **Until God defeats.** *Psalms 110:1; Heb. 1:13*. This is God's promise to defeat these enemies, in order to destroy them!

26. The last enemy. Death will be destroyed by the RAISING FROM DEATH! Christ is the *guarantee*; the Resurrection will be the *fact!* Compare notes on *Rev. 20:12-15; Rom. 5:18*.

27. For the scripture says. "What I have said about the duration of Christ's Kingdom and his handing it over to the Father, agrees with the words of *Psalms 8:6* as explained in *Heb. 2:8-9*." **Do not include God himself.** The Greeks had a myth about Jupiter dethroning his father Saturn and exiling him to the Fortunate Island. By proving from the words of the Psalm that the Father did not place himself under the authority of the Son, the apostle shows that not only is the supreme rule of the Father declared in the Psalm, but when the Son's rule is no longer needed, the Father will receive back the Kingdom and rule it forever in person.

28. But when all things. "When there is no longer any need for a prophet to teach, a priest to make a sin-offering, or a king to rule under God." In other words, when Christ's mission is complete. Compare note on *Rev. 6:11*. **Then he himself, the Son.** Compare *verse 24*. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The end" does not mean the termination of *Christ's sovereignty*, which in its largest sense began before the world (*John 1:1-3; 17:5*) and is its goal (*Col. 1:16*); but the termination of *the reign of sin and death* (*Rom. 5:21; compare John 6:37-40*)."

²⁹Now, what of those people who are baptized for the dead? What do they hope to accomplish? If it is true, as they claim, that the dead are not raised to life, why are they being baptized for the dead? ³⁰And as for us—why would we run the risk of danger every hour? ³¹Brothers, I face death every day! The pride I have in you in our life in Christ Jesus our Lord makes me declare this. ³²If, as it were, I have fought “wild beasts” here in Ephesus, simply from human motives, what have I gained? But if the dead are not raised to life, then, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die,” as the saying goes.

³³Do not be fooled. “Bad companions ruin good character.” ³⁴Come back to your right senses and stop your sinful ways. I say this to your shame: some of you do not know God.

The Resurrection Body

³⁵Someone will ask, “How can the dead be raised to life? What kind of body will they

Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? And as ³⁰for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I die ³¹every day—I mean that, brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought ³²wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

Do not be misled: “Bad ³³company corrupts good character.” Come back to ³⁴your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

The Resurrection Body

But someone may ask, ³⁵“How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will

29. **Who are baptized for the dead?** If we knew the exact wording of the Corinthians' question, it would be easy to know exactly what Paul means. But we do know this is part of his logic in proving the dead will be raised. *MacKnight* translates this: “who are baptized for THE RESURRECTION of the dead.” Then, we take this as Paul continuing his reasoning of verses 16-19. (1) All the Corinthians were baptized (*Acts 18:8*). (2) They were baptized into union with Christ and shared his death (*Rom. 6:3-5*). (3) Their baptism was in hope of being raised from death through Christ's resurrection (*1 Pet. 3:21*). *Shepherd* sees *2 Cor. 4:11* as an added element, and says: “What is to become of those who on being baptized do so knowing that it may prove their death warrant, if the dead rise not?” Compare *verse 30*.

30. **Why would we run the risk?** If there were no Resurrection??? Compare *2 Cor. 11:23-28*.

31. **I face death every day!** This is a vivid picture of his constant danger!

32. **I have fought “wild beasts.”** Most take these words as figurative of the opposition he faced from unbelievers. But *MacKnight* and most of the ancient scholars think this actually happened just as Paul says, and that *2 Cor. 1:8* and the customs of the time imply that Paul actually faced wild beasts in the arena. **But if the dead are not raised.** Paul points to what “everybody says.” The words Paul quotes speak the *moral recklessness* of those who believe death ends it all!

33. **Do not be fooled.** “Do not let the false logic of the wicked fool you, especially about the raising from death. Your good character can be ruined by the *unbelief* that is hidden in what they say.”

34. **Come back to your right senses.** “Just because some say the dead will not rise does not give you the right to sin!” **Some of you do not know God.** The fact that some were saying the dead will not rise from death and that there is no future life - proved they did not really know God and his power! This is a *shame*, especially when these did claim to know God.

35. **Someone will ask.** These two questions have been asked by people in all ages of time. **How can?** “The body goes back to dust, or is burnt up, and the elements of it go to form the bodies of other people. How is it possible?” **What kind?** “What kind of body would they have if they could come out of the grave?”

have?" ³⁶You fool! When you plant a seed in the ground it does not sprout to life unless it dies.

³⁷And what you plant in the ground is a bare seed, perhaps a grain of wheat, or of some other kind, not the full-bodied plant that will grow up. ³⁸God provides that seed with the body he wishes; he gives each seed its own proper body.

³⁹And the flesh of living beings is not all the same kind of flesh; men have one kind of flesh, animals another, birds another, and fish another.

⁴⁰And there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; there is a beauty that belongs to heavenly bodies, and another kind of beauty that belongs to earthly bodies. ⁴¹The sun has its own beauty, the moon another beauty, and the stars a different beauty; and even among stars there are different kinds of beauty.

⁴²This is how it will be when the dead are raised to life. When the body is buried it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal. ⁴³When buried, it is ugly and weak; when raised, it will

they come?" How foolish! ³⁶What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When ³⁷you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But ³⁸God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the ³⁹same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heav- ⁴⁰enly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun ⁴¹has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

So it will be with the res- ⁴²urrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable; it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, ⁴³it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in

36. **You fool!** "Nature itself teaches you this lesson." **Unless it dies.** The body of the seed is destroyed, but out of it comes the new plant. So long as the body of the seed is protected, it cannot grow.

37. **Not the full-bodied plant.** But the full-bodied plant is contained in the seed (even though it is dormant), and under the proper conditions, it grows up out of the seed. The point is that the plant is not the very seed that was planted, so our new body will not be the same body that was buried, *but there is a connection between the two!*

38. **God provides that seed.** Nature shows the greatness of God! Compare *1 John 3:1-3*.

39. **And the flesh.** "The flesh itself of man, animals, birds, and fish is another example of God's power. God has structured each to fit into the *ecosystem*. Will he not also structure the bodies of those raised from death?"

40. **And there are.** Each of these is also structured to fill its *role* in the Creation.

41. **The sun.** Paul shows us the variety in the "heavenly bodies." All of this is proof of a future body so different from our present body that we cannot begin to imagine what it will be like!

42. **This is how it will be.** "The resurrection of the dead is as *possible* as all these examples which I have just shown you." **It is mortal.** "When the body is buried, it can decay and be destroyed." **It will be immortal.** "The new body will not decay, nor will it ever be destroyed (but see *Matt. 10:28* and note)."

43. **Ugly and weak.** Because of mutilation, disease, old age, and death. **Beautiful and strong.** Compare *Luke 20:36; Phil. 3:20-21*.

be beautiful and strong. ⁴⁴When buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body. There is, of course, a physical body, so there has to be a spiritual body. ⁴⁵For the scripture says, "The first man, Adam, was created a living being"; but the last Adam is the life-giving Spirit. ⁴⁶It is not the spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first Adam was made of the dust of the earth; the second Adam came from heaven. ⁴⁸Those who belong to the earth are like the one who was made of earth; those who are of heaven are like the one who came from heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we wear the likeness of the man made of earth, so we will wear the likeness of the Man from heaven.

⁵⁰What I mean, brothers, is this: what is made of flesh and blood cannot share in God's Kingdom, and what is mortal cannot possess immortality.

⁵¹Listen to this secret: we shall not all die, but

power; it is sown a natural 44
body, it is raised a spiritual
body.

If there is a natural body,
there is also a spiritual body.
So it is written: "The first
man Adam became a living 45
being"; the last Adam, a
life-giving spirit. The spiritual 46
did not come first, but
the natural, and after that
the spiritual. The first man 47
was of the dust of the earth,
the second man from heav-
en. As was the earthly man, 48
so are those who are of the
earth; and as is the man
from heaven, so also are
those who are of heaven.
And just as we have borne 49
the likeness of the earthly
man, so we shall bear the
likeness of the man from
heaven.

I declare to you, brothers, 50
that flesh and blood cannot
inherit the kingdom of God,
nor does the perishable in-
herit the imperishable. Lis- 51
ten, I tell you a mystery: We
shall not all sleep, but we

44. **When buried** it is flesh and blood, under the curse (*Gen. 3:16-19*). **When raised** it will be a spiritual body, structured to fit into the *eternal world* (*1 John 3:1-3*).

45. **For the scripture says.** Paul paraphrases *Gen. 2:7* Septuagint, which says that Adam was created a *living being*. [*ΨΥΧΗ* means both soul and life, according to the context. *ΨΥΧΗΝ ΖΩΣΑΝ* here means *living being*.] This is life in the *animal or natural* sense. **Is the life-giving Spirit.** The *natural* body depended upon the presence of the soul for its life. Our spiritual bodies will not be such fragile things. Paul implies a *fusing* of our triune nature in *1 Thess. 5:23*. But there is no way we can know just what this will be.

46. **That comes first.** First Adam, then Christ. First the physical, then the spiritual.

47. **Made of dust.** *Gen. 2:7* **Came from heaven.** Compare *2 Cor. 5:2-3* and notes.

48. **Those who belong to the earth.** Our natural bodies are like Adam's body. **Those who are of heaven.** Our spiritual bodies will be like Christ's resurrection body. Compare *Phil. 3:20-21*.

49. **The likeness.** "We Christians wear the likeness of Adam in our physical bodies as we live on earth for a short time. We will wear the likeness of Christ in our spiritual bodies as we live forever in eternity!"

50. **What I mean.** "Nature prohibits eternal life in this earthly body. Our own resurrection or change must come before we can possibly share in God's Kingdom of Eternity!"

51. **Listen to this secret.** This is a new truth which they did not have! He challenges the false teacher and the others with this revelation from God! **We shall not all die.** When Christ Comes, many (perhaps millions) will not die (as we understand death)! **All be changed.** *1 Thess. 4:17*.

in an instant we shall all be changed, ⁵²as quickly as the blinking of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. For when it sounds, the dead will be raised immortal beings, and we shall all be changed. ⁵³For what is mortal must clothe itself with what is immortal; what will die must clothe itself with what cannot die. ⁵⁴So when what is mortal has been clothed with what is immortal, and when what will die has been clothed with what cannot die, then the scripture will come true: "Death is destroyed; victory is complete!"

⁵⁵"Where, Death, is your victory?

Where, Death, is your power to hurt?"

⁵⁶Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

⁵⁸So then, my dear brothers, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever without value.

shall all be changed—in a 52 flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For the perishable 53 must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When 54 the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your 55 victory?"

Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, 56 and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! 57 He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my dear 58 brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

52. As the blinking of an eye. The change will be instantaneous! Notice this clearly shows the time factor in 1 Thess. 4:16-17. When the last trumpet sounds. Compare Heb. 12:18-21.

53. For what is mortal. To share the Kingdom of God, our mortal bodies must become immortal, no longer capable of dying. Compare 2 Cor. 5:1-5.

54. Then the scripture will come true. The Resurrection will cancel the curse of death placed on mankind in Gen. 3:16-19. See verse 26.

55. Where, Death? Paul adapts the language of Hosea 13:14 as a song of victory! "Death, who lead the human family captive, where is your victory? All the dead have been rescued from you! With your power to hurt you killed God's people. Where now is your power to hurt, since they cannot die anymore?"

56. Death gets its power to hurt. Compare Rom. 5:17, 21; 6:23. Sin gets its power from the Law. In these seven words Paul condenses his teaching in Rom. 4:15; 5:20; 6:14; ch 7; Gal. 2:16; ch 3; 4:21-5:4. "The Law of God, imposing on sinful man impossible yet necessary tasks, promising salvation upon terms he can never fulfill and threatening death upon non-fulfillment, in effect exasperates his sin and involves him in hopeless guilt." [But see Rom. 8:1-4 and notes.]

57. But thanks be to God. God gives us a way to escape from sin and death! The Resurrection comes through Christ on the cross!

58. Stand firm and steady. "Do this because the dead will be raised to life and God's people will be happy beyond any human imagination in that Eternal Kingdom!!!" Keep busy. Compare verse 14. Christ did raise from death!!! Therefore their work for the Lord is not empty and useless.

people. I beg you, my brothers, ¹⁶to follow the leadership of such people as these, and of anyone else who works and serves with them.

¹⁷I am happy over the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus; they have made up for your absence, ¹⁸and have cheered me up, just as they cheered you up. Such men as these deserve notice.

¹⁹The churches in the province of Asia send you their greetings; Aquila and Priscilla and the church that meets in their house send warm Christian greetings. ²⁰All the brothers here send greetings.

Greet one another with a brotherly kiss.

²¹With my own hand I write this: *Greetings from Paul.*

²²Whoever does not love the Lord—a curse on him!

Maranatha—Our Lord, come!

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

²⁴My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

to submit to such as these ¹⁶
and to everyone who joins in
the work and labors at it. ¹⁷
I was glad when Stephanas,
Fortunatus and Achaicus
arrived, because they have
supplied what was lacking
from you. For they refreshed ¹⁸
my spirit and yours also.
Such men deserve recogni-
tion.

Final Greetings

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. All the brothers here ²⁰
send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

I, Paul, write this greeting ²¹
in my own hand.

If anyone does not love ²²
the Lord—a curse be on him. Come, O Lord!

The grace of the Lord ²³
Jesus be with you.

My love to all of you in ²⁴
Christ Jesus.

16. **To follow the leadership.** "A congregation is as strong as its most spiritual members." The spiritually mature are to give leadership to the spiritual immature. Compare *Eph. 4:11-15*.

17. **I am happy.** Some think this Stephanas is the son of the one in *verse 15*. These three must have brought Paul the letter mentioned in *1 Cor. 7:1*.

18. **And have cheered me up.** By bringing news of the Corinthians. **Deserve notice.** This repeats the advice of *verse 16*. See also *1 Thess. 5:12-13*.

19. **The churches.** Paul is in constant contact with the churches through his *evangelists* such as Timothy. He *passes on* their greetings in his letter. **Aquila and Priscilla.** They were former members of the church at Corinth (*Acts 18:2, 18*), who were now with Paul. **And the church.** See notes on *Rom. 16:5, 23*.

20. **All the brothers.** The Christians at Ephesus. *MacKnight* thinks *brother* was used to *identify* a preacher (*1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; 2:13*) and that Paul is sending greetings from the preaching brothers at Ephesus. **With a brotherly kiss.** See note on *Rom. 16:16*.

21. **With my own hand I write this.** Paul signed his letters to show they were genuine. One of his associates did the actual writing (*Rom. 16:22*). *2 Thess. 2:2* implies that some counterfeit letters were being circulated in his name.

22. **Whoever does not love the Lord.** *MacKnight* writes: "If any one professing the gospel, *love not the Lord Jesus Christ*, I with my own hand write this greatest curse against him." *Maranatha*. This is in Aramaic, and means: *Our Lord, come!* First century Christians ended their prayers with these words. The gospel says Jesus will Come Again! Compare *Phil. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:14-16; James 5:7-9; Rev. 1:7; 3:11; 22:20*.

23-24. **The grace.** His final greeting. Compare *2 Cor. 13:13*. He assures them of his love for them (since he has scolded them strongly).

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS

Paul had written First Corinthians in the spring of 55 A.D. This Letter was written a few months later from somewhere in Macedonia, as he visited the churches before going to Corinth. After writing First Corinthians, Paul sent Timothy to Corinth (*1 Cor. 16:10-11*), probably with that Letter. Timothy returned with a gloomy report of what the false apostles were doing to undermine Paul's work. Paul hurried to Corinth by boat, but his visit was *painful* (*2 Cor. 2:1*)! He then returned to Ephesus. Since he had told the Corinthians he would return to Corinth before going to Macedonia, he wrote a letter to substitute for his planned visit. This letter was written with "a greatly troubled and distressed heart" (*2 Cor. 2:4*). Paul sent Titus to Corinth with it. After the riot at Ephesus (*Acts 19:23-25*), Paul went to Troas (this would still be spring, 55 A.D.). Titus was supposed to meet Paul there, but did not arrive (*2 Cor. 2:12-13*). Paul went ahead to Macedonia and Titus met him there with an improved report on Corinth. Paul, and Timothy, then wrote Second Corinthians, which was delivered to Corinth by Titus and two others. They were to collect the contribution from Corinth (*2 Cor. 8:16-23; 9:4*) before Paul got there, and he planned to visit Corinth soon (*2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1*).

Paul writes to answer the slander by which the false apostles tried to undermine his authority. In doing this he mentions facts which prove him to be an apostle, given authority by Christ to direct the faith and practice of all the members of the church. He also explains the general principles of religion and morality, in such a way that they form a guide for ourselves. But note that Paul wrote to different groups in the church, and that not all the things which he said apply to everyone! Paul writes as one who expects to be in Corinth shortly. He was able to do this, as *Acts 20:3* shows us (see notes there).

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

1 From Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and from our brother Timothy—

To the church of God in Corinth, and to all God's people in all Greece:

²May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul Gives Thanks to God

³Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! ⁴He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help those who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God. ⁵Just as we have a share in Christ's many sufferings, so also through Christ we share in his great help. ⁶If we suffer, it is for your help and salvation; if we are helped, then you too are helped and given the strength to endure with patience the same sufferings that we also endure.

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2

The God of All Comfort

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort; which produces in you patient endurance of the same 3
4
5
6

¹ **From Paul.** Compare note on *1 Cor. 1:1*. **Our brother Timothy.** He had taken the First Letter to Corinth (*1 Cor. 4:17*), and was back with Paul at this time. **To the church of God.** See note on *1 Cor. 1:2*.

² **Give you grace and peace.** See note on *1 Cor. 1:3*.

³ **Let us give thanks!** Compare *Eph. 1:3*; *1 Pet. 1:3* and notes.

⁴ **He helps us.** We are not orphans!!! God is our Father!!! **So that we.** Christian love is treating others as God has treated us in Christ. If we have learned from the help which God gives us, we will be able to help others.

⁵ **In Christ's many sufferings.** Christ suffers with his people when they suffer (*Acts 9:4-5* and notes). Therefore when Paul suffered for Christ, or rather BECAUSE of his relationship to Christ, he was sharing Christ's many sufferings. **So also through Christ.** Paul understood he was NEW in his union to Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*), and he knew the help which Christ promises to his people (such as *Rom. 8:28*; *1 Cor. 10:13*, etc.).

⁶ **If we suffer.** Compare *verse 8*. **It is for your help.** The example of Paul's suffering and endurance, and how the Lord made it all work out to His glory, ought to fill them with hope! Compare *1 Thess. 2:14-16* and notes.

⁷So our hope in you is never shaken; we know that just as you share in our sufferings, you also share in the help we receive.

⁸We want to remind you, brothers, of the trouble we had in the province of Asia. The burdens laid upon us were so great and so heavy, that we gave up all hope of living. ⁹We felt that the sentence of death had been passed against us. But this happened so that we should rely, not on ourselves, but only on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰From such terrible dangers of death he saved us, and will save us; and we have placed our hope in him that he will save us again, ¹¹as you help us by means of your prayers for us. So it will be that the many prayers for us will be answered, and God will bless us; and many will raise their voices to him in thanksgiving for us.

The Change in Paul's Plans

¹²This is what we are proud of: our conscience assures us that our lives in this world, and especially our relations with you, have been ruled by God-given frankness and sincerity, by the

sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Paul's Change of Plans

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that

7. **So our hope in you.** "I have confidence in your faithfulness, because you also know the promise and help of the Lord."

8. **Of the trouble.** This is something that had happened recently. *MacKnight* says it would not have been the riot in *Acts 19:30*, but another time when he faced horrible death, mentioned in *1 Cor. 15:32*. Perhaps Alexander the metalworker was behind this (*2 Tim. 4:14-15*), or someone like him. **All hope of living.** Paul is not one to exaggerate! This shows how serious it really was. The Corinthians knew all about this, and Paul does not give any details.

9. **But this happened.** "God let me come so near death that I could almost feel myself already dead! He did this to teach me not to trust ANYONE except Him, who raises the dead."

10. **From such terrible dangers.** "He saves me daily from such dangers as this!" **That he will save us again.** "I am not afraid that the Lord will fail us! Look at the examples of the past!"

11. **As you help us.** The prayers of the Corinthian Christians had also been a source of help, as they plead with God for him. **And God will bless us.** In response to these many prayers! Compare *James 5:16-18* and notes.

12. **This is what we are proud of.** Paul is not like the false teacher at Corinth. Rather than being proud of his Jewish heritage and the Law of Moses, Paul is proud that his life and his relationship with the Corinthians have been ruled by God-given frankness and sincerity. **Frankness.** Paul has used no tricks

power of God's grace, and not by human wisdom. ¹³We write to you only what you can read and understand. And I hope that you will come to understand completely ¹⁴what you now understand only in part, so that in the Day of the Lord Jesus you can be as proud of us as we shall be of you.

¹⁵I was so sure of all this that I made plans at first to visit you in order that you might be blessed twice. ¹⁶For I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and again on my way back, to get help from you for my trip to Judea. ¹⁷In planning this did I appear fickle? When I make my plans, do I make them from selfish motives, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time? ¹⁸As God is true, my promise to you was not a "Yes" and a "No." ¹⁹For Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was preached among you by Silas, Timothy, and myself, is not one who is "Yes" and "No." On the contrary, he

are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and

on them, but has given them the plain truth. The false teacher distorted the truth to please certain people. **Sincerity.** "My motivation is Christian love and a true wish to bring everyone to Christ!" Compare *verse 15-19*.

13. Only what you can read and understand. The false teacher must have said that Paul spoke one thing and did another (*verse 17*). Paul does not want any misunderstanding, so he explains in the next few verses.

14. Only in part. "Some of you already understand that I write you the truth in frankness and sincerity. I hope that all of you will come to understand that. In the Day when Christ judges the world, I want you to be as proud of me, as I will be of you." Compare *2 Cor. 5:11-12*.

15. I was so sure. "I thought you believed me to be a faithful apostle of Christ." **That I made plans at first.** Because Paul changed his plans to come to Corinth again, the false teacher accused him of being unreliable. **Blessed twice.** By stopping at Corinth twice, as *verse 16* explains.

16. For I planned. He had planned to go through Corinth on the way to Macedonia and to stop a second time on his return trip. **To get help.** He had planned to ask them to finance his trip to Judea. Contrast this with *1 Cor. 9:14-15*.

17. Fickle? Two accusations had been made against Paul: (1) that he is fickle; (2) that he makes plans from selfish motives. **Ready to say.** They had accused him of changing his mind at the least whim, of breaking his promises, and said you could not depend upon a thing he said!

18. As God is true. "My change of plans was not being fickle or from selfish motives. It was God's will!"

19. For Jesus Christ. Paul points to Jesus Christ and the Good News of God's finished work in Christ which he and the others preached, as proof that he is stable and dependable! "Think about the fact that I preached the Good News at Corinth with God-given frankness and sincerity!" **He is God's**

is God's "Yes"; ²⁰for it is he who is the "Yes" to all of God's promises. This is the reason that through Jesus Christ our "Amen" is said, to the glory of God. ²¹It is God himself who makes us sure, with you, of our life in Christ; it is God himself who has set us apart, ²²who placed his mark of ownership upon us, and who gave the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee of all that he has for us.

²³I call God as my witness—he knows my heart! It was in order to spare you that I decided not to go to Corinth. ²⁴We are not trying to dictate to you what you must believe; because you stand firm in the faith. Instead, we are working with you for your own happiness.

2 So I made up my mind about this: I would not come to you again to make you sad. ²For

Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

I call God as my witness ²³ that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. Not that we lord it ²⁴ over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand **2** firm. So I made up my ¹ mind that I would not make another painful visit

"Yes." Christ is the *source of truth* and the *GUARANTEE* that God keeps his promises! There is also the thought here that all true servants of God preach the same message of Good News about God's act in Christ. The Corinthians knew this to be true of what Paul, Silas, and Timothy had preached.

20. For it is he. *Acts 13:32-33* proves that what God had promised to Abraham, Israel and David, was made to come true when Jesus was raised from death!!! **This is the reason.** "It is because Christ is the 'Yes' to all God's promises, that our 'Amen' is morally proper!" Compare *1 Cor. 14:16; Rom. 15:9*.

21. It is God himself. As a *montheistic-trinitarian* (see note on *Rom. 16:27*), Paul shows that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in the work of salvation! **Makes us sure.** "God has made His guarantee of our new life in Christ!" **Set us apart.** *Anoint* = set apart for a particular mission. In the Old Testament, kings and priests were anointed to appoint them to their mission. The Christian is set apart (anointed) when he or she receives the Holy Spirit at baptism (*Acts 2:38*).

22. Mark of ownership. Abraham was circumcised as a mark of God's ownership. For the Christian, the Holy Spirit is God's mark of ownership. See *Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30*; compare *Rev. 7:3; 9:4; 14:1*; and note on *Heb. 10:29*. **As the guarantee.** The Holy Spirit is a pledge or down-payment which promises that full payment will be made. See *2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:11*.

23. I call God. We see how important it was to Paul to re-establish the confidence the Corinthians once had in him. He calls God as his witness! **It was.** Here is the reason why he changed his travel plans. After the *painful* meeting (*2 Cor. 2:1*), he decided it was best to spare them a second such incident. Remember: as an apostle, Paul had supernatural wisdom.

24. We are not. Because the word "spare" in *verse 23* might sound like he was trying to domineer them, he explains that this is not his intent. Even an apostle is not a church-Boss!!! Compare *1 Pet. 5:3*. Paul is a helper who works *with* them.

1. So I. Acts does not mention this *painful visit*, but see *2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1-2*. Paul implies that he made up his mind not to come, only after some very serious consideration of the matter. Instead of making another painful visit, he sent Titus with a strongly worded letter (which we do not have).

if I were to make you sad, who would be left to cheer me up? Only the very persons I had saddened. ³That is why I wrote that letter to you—I did not want to come to you and be made sad by the very people who should make me glad. For I am convinced that when I am happy, then all of you are happy too. ⁴I wrote you with a greatly troubled and distressed heart, and with many tears, not to make you sad, but to make you realize how much I love you all.

Forgiveness for the Offender

⁵Now, if anyone has made somebody sad, he has not done it to me but to you; or to some of you, at least, since I do not want to be too hard on him. ⁶It is enough for this person that he has been punished in this way by most of you. ⁷Now, however, you should forgive him and encourage him, to keep him from becoming so sad as to give up completely. ⁸Let him know, then, I beg you,

to you. For if I grieve you, ² who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? I wrote as I did so ³ that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. For I wrote ⁴ you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

Forgiveness for the Sinner

If anyone has caused ⁵ grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. ⁶ The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, ⁷ you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, ⁸ therefore, to reaffirm your

2. For if I. Paul was so much a part of the churches which he served, that their sorrow was his sorrow!!! It would give him no pleasure to make them sad, because he himself would share their sadness!

3. That is why. Compare 2 Cor. 13:10. If he came in person, he might have to use harsh methods to deal with the problems. Compare Acts 13:9-11.

4. A greatly troubled and distressed heart. This is how Paul himself felt as he wrote the strongly worded letter. [Johnson thinks this letter is First Corinthians, but there is no evidence that Paul wrote it in grief or that First Corinthians was to "spare" its readers. Scholars now believe that the "lost letter" said much the same thing as chapters 10-13 of Second Corinthians.]

5. Now. This is probably not the incestuous man, since this anyone seems to have attacked Paul's work as an apostle, in an insulting way! In doing this, the anyone has insulted the entire messianic community (church) at Corinth which is built on Paul's work as an apostle! But Paul does not want to be too harsh to the offender. Compare note on 2 Cor. 7:11.

6. It is enough. The Corinthian church followed Paul's instruction in the letter, and the majority punished the offender (see 2 Cor. 7:8-11). When punishment has brought the desired change, it is enough!

7. Now, however. Christians must not hold grudges! When the offender repents, the Christian response is to forgive him and encourage him! Evidently Paul had heard through Titus that the offender was almost at the point of giving up completely in despair.

8. Let him know. Paul does not use his authority to demand it, but he gently begs them to do this thing. Not only are they to officially accept him back into their fellowship, but by their actions they are to let him know that they really do love him!

that you really do love him. ⁹I wrote you that letter for this very reason: I wanted to find out how well you had stood the test, and whether you are always ready to obey my instruction. ¹⁰When you forgive someone for what he has done, I forgive him too. For when I forgive—if, indeed, I need to forgive anything—I do it because of you, in Christ's presence, ¹¹in order to keep Satan from getting the upper hand over us; for we know what his plans are.

Paul's Anxiety in Troas

¹²When I arrived in Troas to preach the Good News about Christ, I found that the Lord had opened the way for the work there. ¹³But I was deeply worried because I could not find our brother Titus. So I said good-bye to the people there, and went on to Macedonia.

Victory through Christ

¹⁴But thanks be to God! For in union with Christ we are always led by God as prisoners in

love for him. The reason I ⁹wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. If ¹⁰you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Ministers of the New Covenant

Now when I went to Troas ¹²to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of ¹³mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye and went on to Macedonia.

But thanks be to God, ¹⁴who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ

9. **For this very reason.** Paul says that their treatment of the offender was a test of them! Paul will not DOMINEER (2 Cor. 1:24), but he will demand their obedience to the message of the Good News.

10. **When you forgive.** They had joined with Paul in punishing the offender, now Paul joins with them in forgiving the man. **If, indeed, I need.** "You as the messianic community must do the forgiving. I, Paul, can only confirm it!"

11. **To keep Satan from.** "A harsh, unforgiving spirit, will allow Satan to get an upper hand over us! Satan, making us think it is a matter of duty and loyalty, tempts us to adopt harsh measures, to drive offenders to despair and make them give up completely, and to turn outsiders away from the Good News!"

12. **When I arrived in Troas.** Paul does not give us details of his recent plans and travel. He must have gone to Troas after the riot at Ephesus. [But the visit in Acts 20:6 must have been at a later time.] Titus was supposed to meet with Paul there, but did not arrive. **The Lord had opened.** Note that Paul did not sit idle as he waited for Titus!!! He had come there to preach the Good News of Christ, and the Lord opened the way for the work there!!!

13. **Deeply worried.** Perhaps Paul was afraid Corinth had rejected his letter and that some special problem kept Titus there. It certainly was the Lord's will that Paul move on, and so he said good-bye to the friends there and went on to Macedonia.

14. **But thanks be to God!** Paul is jubilant when Titus brings him the good report from Corinth! [Paul returns to the theme of his meeting with Titus in 2 Cor. 7:5.] **We are always led by God.** Army commanders led their captives in a victory parade after a successful battle. Paul uses this symbolism to

Christ's victory procession. God uses us to make the knowledge about Christ spread everywhere like a sweet smell. ¹⁵For we are like a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God, which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost. ¹⁶For those who are being lost, it is a deadly stench that kills; for those who are being saved, it is a fragrance that brings life. Who, then, is capable for such a task? ¹⁷We are not like so many others, who handle God's message as if it were cheap merchandise; but because God has sent us, we speak with sincerity in his presence, as servants of Christ.

and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For ¹⁵ we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we ¹⁶ are the stench of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? Unlike so ¹⁷ many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.

3 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or

Servants of the New Covenant

3 Does this sound as if we were again boasting about ourselves? Could it be that, like some

describe the success of the Good News in capturing men and women for Christ! **God uses us.** Paul speaks of himself as God's prisoner (*Philemon vs. 1, 9*), and shows that God and Christ control his life. This is another answer to those who say he is fickle, but he is also thinking how God uses his own misery and problems to bring honor to Himself and to spread the influence of the Good News!!!

15. A sweet-smelling incense. "We are by our preaching a sweet-smelling incense which Christ offers to God!" This is still the symbolism of the victory parade. The incense announced both death to the prisoners and life to the victors! In the same way, the Good News which Paul preached had differing results on the ones who heard it. **Being saved . . . being lost.** Paul uses present participles to show continuing action. Men in this world are either **FOLLOWING** the way of life or the way of death. But their eternal destiny is not *finalized* until death calls them away (but see *Rev. 22:11* and note). *Free will* holds both the possibility of falling away and of turning from sin!

16. A deadly stench. The Good News hardens some in their sin, and it is to them the stench of death! **A fragrance.** The Good News brings a response in others that opens to them the blessings of God! **Who, then?** "Since this is in fact a matter of life and death, who is qualified to do such a work?"

17. As if it were cheap merchandise. Paul is qualified to God's work by his union with Jesus Christ (*Gal. 2:20*). In contrast to true servants of God are those who peddle the Good News like it was cheap merchandise. Paul uses a word which means "hucksters who cheat people by peddling worthless merchandise." The false teachers cheat and lie, distort the Good News (*2 Cor. 4:2*), and victimize people (*2 Cor. 11:13*). **But because God.** The ministry of Paul and every true servant of God, comes from God! No false teacher can truly say this. The **PRESENCE** of the Holy Spirit (which shows itself by faith, hope, and love) is infallible evidence that a person is in fact a true servant of God. For this reason we have the *written Word* to measure the reality of every person's *faith, hope, and love!!!*

1. Does this sound? It could be that Paul's strongly worded letter made some say he was boasting about himself. Something important is involved here, because Paul accuses his opponents of boasting (*2 Cor. 10:12*), but denies boasting about himself (*2 Cor. 5:12*). *MacKnight* says: "The things mentioned in the beginning of this chapter show, that the false teacher had established himself at Corinth, neither by working miracles, nor by communicating to the Corinthians spiritual gifts, but by producing letters of recommendation from some brethren in Judea, and by boasting about his own talents."

other people, we need letters of recommendation to you or from you? ²You yourselves are the letter we have, written on our hearts, for everyone to know and read. ³It is clear that Christ himself wrote this letter and sent it by us. It is written not with ink on stone tablets, but on human hearts, with the Spirit of the living God.

⁴We say this because we have confidence in God through Christ. ⁵There is nothing in us that allows us to claim that we are capable of doing this work. The capacity we have comes from God; ⁶it is he who made us capable of serving the new covenant, which consists not of a written law, but of the Spirit. The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷The Law was carved in letters on stone tablets, and God's glory appeared when it was given. Even though the brightness on Moses' face faded away, it was so strong that the people of Israel

from you? You yourselves ² are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. ³

Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to judge anything we do, but our competence comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. ⁴ ⁵ ⁶

The Glory of the New Covenant

Now if the ministry that ⁷ brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the

2. **You yourselves.** The existence of the messianic community at Corinth is the only credential which Paul needs! **Written on our hearts.** *MacKnight* says it is best to understand this as the letter itself written on the heart of Paul, and a copy of that same letter written on the hearts of the Corinthians. **To know and read.** *MacKnight* thinks the letter written on Paul's heart was the spiritual gifts which he had as an apostle (compare *1 Thess. 1:5* and note). But we can also understand this to mean that the whole world can know and read Paul's work through the church at Corinth!

3. **That Christ himself.** "Christ himself wrote the letter and I delivered it by converting you to Christ and giving you the gifts from the Spirit!" **It is written.** Paul purposely associates the letters of recommendation that some had received from Judea, with the stone tablets of the Law. Christ does not write with ink on stone tablets, but with the Spirit on human hearts!!! Paul is saying that the Corinthian Christians are living evidence of Jeremiah's prophecy coming true! Compare *Heb. 8:10* and notes.

4. **We say this.** "This kind of a boast, that you are a copy of our letter of recommendation, we have in the presence of God through the assistance of Christ!"

5. **There is nothing in us.** The false teachers boasted about their own talents. Paul does no such thing! **Comes from God.** "It is God who tells us how to carry out our mission as apostles, and it is God who gives us the capacity to do it!!!"

6. **Not of a written law.** Jeremiah's prophecy told about a *new covenant* (*Heb. 8:10*). It would be a time when God would make *us capable of serving*, as Paul says here. Paul sees this fulfilled in the Holy Spirit as a gift (the indwelling). So he contrasts the written law (the old covenant) with the *new covenant* of the Spirit. Compare *Rom. 2:27-29; ch 7 & 8*. See also note on the three uses of law, *Rom. 3:31*. **Death . . . life.** The written law brings death because it is weak through our human nature. The Spirit gives life, something that law cannot do (*Gal. 3:21*). Christians have this life *now* (*John 6:63; 7:37-39*), because they receive the Spirit at baptism (*Col. 2:12-13; Acts 5:32*).

7. **The Law.** The false teachers were very proud of The Law! Paul shows us that The Law was a thing of glory! When Moses came down from the mountain with the stone tablets of The Law, his face shone with a brilliant, blinding light! But that brightness faded away, and Paul uses this to introduce the

could not keep their eyes fixed on him. If the Law, whose service was to bring death, came with such glory, ⁸how much greater is the glory that belongs to the service of the Spirit! ⁹The service by which men are condemned was glorious; how much more glorious is the service by which men are declared innocent! ¹⁰We may say that, because of the far brighter glory now, the glory that was so bright in the past is gone. ¹¹For if there was glory in that which lasted for a while, how much more glory is there in that which lasts forever!

¹²Because we have this hope, we are very bold. ¹³We are not like Moses, who had to put a veil over his face, so that the people of Israel would not see the brightness fade and disappear. ¹⁴Their minds, indeed, were closed; and to this very day their minds are covered with the same veil, as they read the books of the old covenant. The veil is removed only when a man is joined to

Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who veiled his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull; for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in

thought, that if The Law, whose service was to bring death, came with such glory, how much greater the glory of the Spirit!!!

8. **How much greater!** In contrast to The Law, the service of the Spirit (1) gives life, not death; (2) is eternal, not fading away; (3) is written on hearts, not stone. Notice that in comparing the service of the two covenants, Paul assumes that he is as great as Moses (*1 Cor. 4:6*), and yet the service of Paul is in fact greater than the service of Moses! See *verse 14*.

9. **Are condemned.** Paul repeats what he has just said, but contrasts *are condemned* (by the old covenant) with *declared innocent* (by the new covenant). ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ = *declared innocent* is a legal term, which implies that God declares a man innocent even though he is actually guilty. See *Rom. 4:3* and note.

10. **Because of.** Paul sees value in God's old covenant (*Rom. 15:4*), yet the far brighter glory of the service of the Spirit supersedes and displaces all else!!!

11. **For.** "If there was glory in the service of Judaism, how much more glory is there in the service of the Spirit, which lasts forever!!!" Compare *Heb. 8:13*. Paul probably says this for the benefit of the *circumcision party* who thought The Law was eternal!

12. **Because.** The facts in *verses 7-11* are the basis of confident hope, which gives the servants of Christ *boldness* in speaking!!! This is Paul's answer to his opponents.

13. **Not like Moses.** Paul again compares himself to Moses, and shows the veil which Moses put over his face symbolized both a lack of boldness and that God's truth was *veiled* in The Law. But as the glory of Moses' face faded away, those who continue to look to Moses or The Law, will find no glory there!

14. **Were closed.** Stephen used the same reasoning (*Acts 7:51-53*). The reason for the Jewish leaders rejecting Christ was that they did not understand the intent and purpose of The Law from the earliest times!!! **Removed only.** Since God's promises made in The Law were fulfilled in Jesus Christ (*Acts 13:32-33*), only when these Jews turned to Christ could they see the true message of The Law!

Christ. ¹⁵Even today, whenever they read the Law of Moses, the veil still covers their minds. ¹⁶But it is removed, as the scripture says, "Moses' veil was removed when he turned to the Lord." ¹⁷Now, "the Lord" in this passage is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom. ¹⁸All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord who is the Spirit, transforms us into his very likeness, in an ever greater degree of glory.

Spiritual Treasure in Clay Pots

4 God, in his mercy, has given us this service, and so we do not become discouraged. ²We put aside all secret and shameful deeds; we do not act with deceit, nor do we falsify the word of God. In the full light of truth, we live in God's sight and try to commend ourselves to everyone's

Christ is it taken away. Even 15
to this day when Moses is
read, a veil covers their
hearts. But whenever any- 16
one turns to the Lord, "The
veil is taken away." Now the 17
Lord is the Spirit, and where
the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom. And we, 18
who with unveiled faces all
reflect the Lord's glory, are
being transformed into his
likeness with ever-increasing
glory, which comes from the
Lord, who is the Spirit.

Treasures in Jars of Clay

4 Therefore, since through
God's mercy we have
this ministry, we do not
lose heart. Rather, we have 2
renounced secret and
shameful ways; we do not
use deception, nor do we
distort the word of God. On
the contrary, by setting forth
the truth plainly we com-
mend ourselves to every
man's conscience in the

15. Even today. Every Sabbath, the Law of Moses (the Old Testament) was read publicly in the synagogue. Paul says the veil still covers their minds! The veil he speaks of, is the veil of prejudice and evil desires which they have constructed for themselves!

16. But it is removed. Paul paraphrases *Exod. 34:34* and uses it to show that when they go into the presence of God **IN FACT**, this veil will be removed! Compare *Rom. 11:23-26* and notes. *When the Jews believe the gospel, then the veil will be removed!*

17. Is the Spirit. What does it mean for the Christian to have this veil removed??? This verse gives the answer!!! Paul is a *monotheistic-trinitarian* (see note on *Rom. 16:27*) and he does not sharply contrast the functions of the Father, Son, and Spirit. **There is freedom.** *The Law* is slavery, *The Spirit* is freedom! The Christian is not a slave, but a son (includes daughter)!!! Compare *Rom. 8:14-17* and notes.

18. All of us, then. *MacKnight* thinks Paul means the apostles only, but it seems better to understand this to mean every Christian, as *Johnson* does. *With uncovered faces.* As Moses removed his veil when he came before the Lord, we Christians reflect the Lord's glory without any need to cover our faces! [There may be a reference here to the fact that Jewish men prayed with their heads covered.] **Transforms us.** Christians are *new* in Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*), and are transformed by their direct access to God. The Spirit is involved in this (*2 Cor. 4:16*); and none of this transformation was available through the old covenant.

1. Has given us this service. Since *2 Cor. 2:17*, Paul has been talking about his capacity for the service of the Spirit. Paul had a special service as an apostle, but every Christian is a servant of God in a general sense. Paul's opponents said he was too *weak* to fulfill his service (see *2 Cor. 10:10*). But God, in his mercy, has given to Paul this *service!* Compare *1 Cor. 7:25*. Because Paul is involved in such a glorious service, nothing can seriously discourage him (*verse 16*)!

2. We put aside. The false teachers used secret and shameful deeds, deceit, and falsified the word of God. Paul never used such methods, even when he was trying to destroy the church. **In the full light of truth.** *Truth* and *love* are two weapons which false teachers cannot use!!!

good conscience. ³For if the gospel we preach is hidden, it is hidden only to those who are being lost. ⁴They do not believe because their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. ⁵For it is not ourselves that we preach; we preach Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶The God who said, "Out of darkness the light shall shine!" is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts, to bring us the light of the knowledge of God's glory, shining in the face of Christ.

⁷Yet we who have this spiritual treasure are like common clay pots, to show that the supreme power belongs to God, not to us. ⁸We are often troubled, but not crushed; sometimes in doubt, but never in despair; ⁹there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend; and though

sight of God. And even if ³
our gospel is veiled, it is
veiled to those who are per- ⁴
ishing. The god of this age
has blinded the minds of un-
believers, so that they can-
not see the light of the gos-
pel of the glory of Christ,
who is the image of God.
For we do not preach our- ⁵
selves, but Jesus Christ as
Lord, and ourselves as your
servants for Jesus' sake. For ⁶
God who said, "Let light
shine out of darkness,"
made his light shine in our
hearts to give us the light of
the knowledge of the glory of
God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure ⁷
in jars of clay to show that
this all-surpassing power is
from God and not from us.
We are hard pressed on ev- ⁸
ery side, but not crushed;
perplexed, but not in des-
pair; persecuted, but not a- ⁹
bandoned; struck down, but

3. **For if.** False teachers speak to confuse the hearer (*1 Tim. 6:3-5*). If the Good News is hidden, it is only because the hearer has made himself a veil from prejudice and evil desires!

4. **Because their minds.** The world is a battleground where truth and error are locked in struggle for men's minds! But God is always in control, and Christ has already won the victory! But those who construct veils for themselves from prejudice and evil desires, allow themselves to be blinded by the evil god of this world, who then uses them to try to prevent others from seeing the light shining on them! **The exact likeness of God.** The false teachers probably called themselves *servants of light* and boasted about their *wisdom*, which Jewish literature described as *God's likeness and reflection*. Paul declares that the *light shining* in the world comes from the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God!!!

5. **For it is not ourselves.** "Even though we apostles are the likeness of Christ, we do not preach ourselves. We preach Jesus Christ as your Lord, and ourselves as your servants!" **For Jesus' sake.** Compare *1 Cor. 9:19-23*.

6. **The God who said.** Paul paraphrases *Gen. 1:3* to show that the same God who was the only source of light in the beginning, is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts! The light is the message which God spoke through his Son (*Heb. 1:2*).

7. **Like common clay pots.** Paul speaks in irony! Who would store treasure in common clay pots!!! Yet God has done just this, to show that the supreme power is His!!! The false teachers boasted about how great they were, and how weak Paul was. But Paul shows that God's power *comes through* in human weakness!!!

8. **We are often troubled.** Paul is an *optimistic-pessimist*. For each word which shows weakness, there is one which shows strength. **Trouble?** Yes, but not crushed and put out of the battle! **In doubt?** Yes, but we do not despair, God will make a way out!

9. **Many enemies?** Yes, but God is still our friend! **Badly hurt?** Yes, but not killed!

badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed. ¹⁰At all times we carry in our mortal bodies the death of Jesus, so that his life also may be seen in our bodies. ¹¹Throughout our lives we are always in danger of death for Jesus' sake, in order that his life may be seen in this mortal body of ours. ¹²This means that death is at work in us; but life is at work in you.

¹³The scripture says, "I spoke because I believed." In the same spirit of faith, we also speak because we believe. ¹⁴We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus to life, will also raise us up with Jesus and bring us, together with you, into his presence. ¹⁵All this is for your sake; and as God's grace reaches more and more people, they will offer more prayers of thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Living by Faith

¹⁶For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually

not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed

10. **The death of Jesus.** Paul sees his suffering (and his weakness???) as sharing in the death of Jesus! Compare *Gal. 6:17; 2 Cor. 13:4*. So that his life. Compare *Rom. 8:10-11; Gal. 2:20*. Paul was a messenger of life, in a world of death!

11. **Always in danger.** The servants of the Good News were always in danger from the enemies of Christ! At great risk they transmitted the *life of Christ* to mankind! Compare *1 Cor. 4:9-13*. No one could accuse the apostles of working for selfish motives!!!

12. **This means.** The death that attacks the servants of Christ in many ways, was the means of spreading the message of life! Paul's work brought suffering to him, but life to those who heard the Good News!

13. **The scripture says.** *Psalm 116:10* Septuagint. *MacKnight* reconstructs the thinking of the Psalmist: "Though I have been in great affliction, yet faith in God's promises hath supported me, so that I can say, I believed, therefore I have spoken in praise of his goodness." Paul points to this example of faith, and says this is what motivates and sustains he and the other servants of Christ!

14. **We know.** Notice how sure Paul is that God will do as He promised! **Will also raise us up.** Christ is the *guarantee* of this (*1 Cor. 15:20-23*)! **Together with you.** The total messianic community. See note on *Matt. 16:18*.

15. **All this.** The suffering and work of the Christian servants. When suffering and work points to a definite goal and purpose, man's ability to endure is almost limitless!!! **Prayers of thanksgiving.** Paul sees Christian prayer as praise to God!!! Compare *Rev. 8:3-4*.

16. **For this reason.** *Verse 15.* **Our physical being.** Paul's service to Christ cost him something in physical strength (*2 Cor. 1:8; 11:23-28*). **Yet our spiritual being.** This is the part of every person that is *morally responsible*. See *Rom. 7:20, 23; Eph. 3:16*. Probably Paul is not thinking about progressive spiritual growth, but the fact that even though his physical strength is being drained away, his spiritual strength is renewed day after day!

decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. ¹⁷And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and external glory, much greater than the trouble.

¹⁸For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time; but what cannot be seen lasts forever. For we know that when

5 this tent we live in—our body here on earth—is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself made, which will last forever. ²And now we sigh, so great is our desire to have our home which is in heaven put on over us; ³by being clothed with it we shall not be found without a body. ⁴While we live in this earthly tent we groan with a feeling of oppression; it is not that we want to get rid of our earthly body, but that we want to have the heavenly one put on over us, so that what is

day by day. For our light **17**
and momentary troubles are
achieving for us an eternal
glory that far outweighs
them all. So we fix our eyes **18**
not on what is seen, but on
what is unseen. For what is
seen is temporary, but what
is unseen is eternal.

Our Heavenly Dwelling

5 Now we know that if the
earthly tent we live in is
destroyed, we have a building
from God, an eternal
house in heaven, not built
by human hands. Mean- **2**
while we groan, longing to
be clothed with our heavenly
dwelling, since when we are **3**
clothed, we will not be found
naked. For while we are in **4**
this tent, we groan and are
burdened, because we do
not wish to be unclothed but
to be clothed with our heav-
enly dwelling, so that what
is mortal may be swallowed

17. **And this.** "Besides, we can endure this small and temporary trouble! What does it amount to, when you compare it with the tremendous and eternal glory which this suffering will bring us!" *Salvation is seized, not achieved!*

18. **For we fix our attention.** "We pay no attention to the glory that this world has to offer (*1 John 2:15-17*). The power, honor, and glory of this world are only temporary!!! But the unseen things of God, which we see through faith, are eternal and last forever!!!"

1. **For we know.** This links what he is about to say, with *2 Cor. 4:16-18*. **This tent we live in.** A tent is a temporary place to live. This is how Paul thinks of this physical body. Compare *Mark 14:58*, where Jesus contrasts his physical body with his resurrection body. See also notes on *1 Cor. 6:19-20*. **Is torn down** by death. **God will have.** Paul looked forward to a resurrection body which God would give him. Greek thought viewed the body as evil, the prisonhouse of the soul. The Bible, however, does not view the body as evil, and points forward to the time when all the dead are raised to live in *another* body which will be eternal! Compare *1 Cor. 15:35-44*.

2. **And now we sigh.** The Christian has already received the *first of God's gifts* (*Rom. 8:23*) which is the *guarantee* (verse 5). But the fact that there is more to come makes Paul eager to make the change! Compare *1 Cor. 15:47*.

3. **Without a body.** Greek thought saw the *immortal soul* living forever without any body at all! Paul and the others proclaimed a raising from death which included a new body. Compare *2 Pet. 3:13* and notes.

4. **While.** "The feeling of oppression does not come from a desire to escape from this world and our suffering, but it comes from our eager desire to exchange this mortal life for true life!!!" **Put on over us.** Paul purposely says it this way to show that there is a *continuity* between our physical body and our heavenly body (*1 Cor. 15:35-54*).

mortal will be swallowed up by life. ⁵God is the one who has prepared us for this change, and he gave us his Spirit as the guarantee of all that he has for us.

⁶So we are always full of courage. We know that as long as we are at home in this body we are away from the Lord's home. ⁷For our life is a matter of faith, not of sight. ⁸We are full of courage, and would much prefer to leave our home in this body and be at home with the Lord. ⁹More than anything else, however, we want to please him, whether in our home here or there. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before Christ, to be judged by him. Each one will receive what he deserves, according to what he has done, good or bad, in his bodily life.

Friendship with God through Christ

¹¹We know what it means to fear the Lord, and so we try to persuade men. God knows us completely, and I hope that in your hearts you

up by life. Now it is God who ⁵ made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Therefore we are always ⁶ confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not ⁷ by sight. We are confident, I ⁸ say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we ⁹ make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

Since, then, we know ¹¹ what it is to fear the Lord, we try to convince men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to

5. **God is the one.** Again Paul points to God as the source of *heavenly house*. Compare *Rom. 5:18* and note. **As the guarantee.** The Spirit is our guarantee, because it is through the Spirit that we will be raised from death (*Rom. 8:11*).

6. **So we.** Now Paul uses the language of a *refugee*. "Because we expect to live eternally, we are always full of courage as we live out our life here!" **We know that.** "As long as we live in this present body, we are away from the Lord's home, and we are still refugees and strangers as we wait!"

7. **Not sight.** "In our life here on earth, we do not see the heavenly things we long for! So our lives are based on faith, not sight."

8. **And would much prefer.** "We have no fear of death, and would like to receive our heavenly home (resurrection body) *now*, and be at home with the Lord!"

9. **We want to please him.** This is Paul's answer to the problem. Whatever the Lord has for him, is what he wants!!! See how Paul explains this in *Phil. 1:18-26*.

10. **Before Christ.** Paul had no idea of anyone earning their salvation (see *Eph. 2:8*)!!! Yet he taught that everyone was obligated to respond to this *grace of God* through good actions in their bodily life.

11. **To fear the Lord.** Not terror, but reverence and respect. Terror is never a valid motive to obey the Lord (*1 John 4:18*). [*MacKnight* takes this to mean: "Knowing, therefore, the terrible-ness of the Lord's displeasure, we persuade men to repent and believe the gospel . . ."] The Good News shows God's love, and so Paul tries to persuade men to see the urgency and truth so that they will escape the coming Judgment through Christ.

know me as well. ¹²We are not trying again to recommend ourselves to you; rather, we are trying to give you a good reason to be proud of us, so that you will be able to answer those who boast about a man's appearance, and not about his character. ¹³Are we really insane? It is for God's sake. Or are we sane? It is for your sake. ¹⁴We are ruled by Christ's love for us, now that we recognize that one man died for all men, which means that all men take part in his death. ¹⁵He died for all men so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but only for him who died and was raised to life for their sake.

¹⁶No longer, then, do we judge anyone by human standards. Even if at one time we judged Christ according to human standards, we no longer do so. ¹⁷When anyone is joined to Christ he is a new being; the old is gone, the new has

your conscience. We are not ¹² trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. If we ¹³ are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, ¹⁴ because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he ¹⁵ died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.

So from now on we re- ¹⁶ gard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in ¹⁷ Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new

12. **We are not.** It may be that in the strong letter, Paul seemed to boast about his work (see *2 Cor. 11:16 to 12:13*). But Paul is very sensitive to the accusation that he has done this! He wants to give them a true picture of his mission and work, so that they can answer the opponents.

13. **Are we really insane?** Some said this about Jesus (*Mark 3:21* and note). *MacKnight* thinks the false teachers accused Paul of being insane because of the risks and dangers he placed himself in for the sake of the Good News. Compare *Acts 26:24* and note. **Or are we sane?** At times Paul reasoned with them very quietly. [*Johnson* thinks the false teachers boasted about their visions from God, but said the visions Paul claimed, were due to insanity.]

14. **By Christ's love.** "In our service to Christ, we are not insane. We are ruled in all this by Christ's love for us. We take great risks and place ourselves in danger, because we recognize that one man died for all men." **Which means.** Christ's death was for all! *Verse 15* explains this. All men take part in his death, but this does not mean that all will be saved. Compare *Rom. 5:18* and note.

15. **So that.** "If you take Christ-on-the-cross seriously, you will see that Jesus died for all, Jew and Gentile. If you imitate Christ, you will no longer live for yourself, but you will live for Christ. For this reason, you become a Christian by being baptized into Christ's death (*Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:12-13*)."

16. **No longer, then.** Christians do not *create distinctions* (*James 2:1-4*). **Even if.** Before Paul became a Christian, he did look at Jesus from a human point of view. He could see no value in the cross. Compare *1 Cor. 18-23*. The cross makes peace between Jew and Gentile (*Eph. 2:14*).

17. **When.** At the time anyone is joined to Christ. See *Gal. 3:27*. **He is.** Not: he will be; but he is! The *new being* is opposed to the human point of view. It supersedes racial distinctions (*Gal. 6:15*), and it is a life of the Spirit (*Rom. 8:10-11*). **The old.** Sin, guilt, and punishment are all put behind! **The new.** Life, forgiveness, the Spirit, a new point of view (*1 Cor. 2:14*), etc.

come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends, and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹Our message is that God was making friends of all men through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins against them, and he has given us the message of how he makes them his friends.

²⁰Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were appealing to you through us: on Christ's behalf, we beg you, let God change you from enemies into friends! ²¹Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that we, in union with him, might share the righteousness of God.

6 In our work together with God, then, we beg of you; you have received God's grace,

come! All this is from God, ¹⁸ who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ²⁰ ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him ²¹ who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.

18. All this is done by God. Paul gives the credit to God! For Paul, the *cross* demonstrates both Christ's love and God's love!!! **Changed us from enemies.** Note Christ's sacrifice changes us, not God! God's act in Christ to set us free changes us from enemies to friends, when we reach out through faith to seize it! **And gave us the task.** The church, and specifically Paul, has the task of making others the friends of God. This is done by preaching the Good News!

19. Our message. The basis of the Good News is that God himself had acted and was making friends of those who had rebelled against him! **Keep an account.** *MacKnight* says: "That God is by Christ bringing back the world to himself, promising not to punish them for their trespasses, but to pardon them upon their faith and repentance." See *Col. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:4-7; Heb. 9:14-15*. It is Christ's doing and dying which makes it possible (*Rom. 8:3-4*). **Given us the message.** The Good News of God's finished work in Christ is the message that changes us into friends of God. See *Rom. 1:16-17* and notes.

20. As though God himself. *Proxy* probably would be a better word than *ambassador*. Paul (and every Christian) acts as a *proxy* for God by trying to persuade others to let God change them from enemies into friends!!!

21. Christ was without sin. The sinlessness of Jesus is affirmed throughout the New Testament. Christ therefore satisfied the righteous demands of the Law. **God made him share our sin.** *MacKnight* understands this to mean that God made Christ our sin-offering. The rite of the *scapegoat* pictured what Jesus would do. The sins of the people were confessed on the goat and transferred to it. At the cross, Jesus shared our sin, which was transferred to him. *Johnson* says: "Since we die with Christ, in him we pay the penalty, and are justified [put right with God]." *God puts men right through their faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22)*.

1. Together with God. Paul sees all the servants of Christ working together with God in the mission of persuading people to let God change them from enemies into friends! **Wasted.** Grace is free, and salvation cannot be earned by our own efforts. Yet God's act in Christ will be wasted by the one who does not receive it with gratitude! We reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ, but we must hold firmly to it! We do this through good actions and holy lives, not to add to what Christ has done, but to *hold on* to be able to receive the promises! There is always a danger that we will *let go* and fall away! Compare *2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 3:4*. Do not think God's grace is cheap! Christ-on-the-cross is the price that was paid to *buy men for God!!!*

and you must not let it be wasted. ²Hear what God says:

"I heard you in the hour to show you favor,

I helped you on the day to save you."

Listen! This is the hour to receive God's favor, today is the day to be saved!

³We do not want anyone to find fault with our work, so we try not to put obstacles in anyone's way. ⁴Instead, in everything we do we show that we are God's servants, by enduring troubles, hardships, and difficulties with great patience.

⁵We have been beaten, jailed, and mobbed; we have been overworked and have gone without sleep or food. ⁶By our purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness we have shown ourselves to be God's servants; by the Holy Spirit, by our true love, ⁷By our message of truth, and by the power of God. We have righteousness as our weapon, both to attack and to defend ourselves.

For he says,

"At the time of my favor I heard you,
and on the day of salvation I helped you."

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Paul's Hardships

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, in every way we show ourselves to be servants of God: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;

2. **Hear.** *Isa. 49:8* Septuagint. *Johnson* understands this prophecy to point to the saving of the Gentiles. Paul uses it to emphasize the fact that we servants of Christ *work together with God!* In the passage quoted, God was through his servant bringing in divine help. **This is the hour!** "Fellow-workers, this is the hour; today is the day to be saved! God will help us as we work to convert the Gentiles to Christ! It is urgent to persuade all mankind to accept God's salvation *now!*!" [Hour = *KAIROS* = divinely given opportunity.]

3. **To find fault.** Paul lives a holy and pure life, so that no one will find fault with his work. All God's servants must do this! **Obstacles.** This includes many things. Probably Paul is pointing to the false teachers who used unholy methods (*2 Cor. 4:2*).

4. **Instead.** The true servant of God must be like his Lord! The false teachers boasted about worldly things. For Paul, they disqualify themselves by this, and destroy any claim to authority. **Troubles.** *2 Cor. 1:8. Hardships. 1 Cor. 4:11. Difficulties. Acts 17:5-8. With great patience.* Dedication.

5. **We have.** Paul shows a general picture of the things which servants of Christ faced in his day! He describes his own personal experience!!!

6-7. **We have shown ourselves.** "This is how we have shown ourselves to be God's servants: by our purity of life and motives, by our knowledge of the Truth, by our patience as we endure suffering, by our kindness toward all, by the Holy Spirit (compare *1 Thess. 1:5*), by our true love which is un-hypocritical, by the fact that we preach the truth, and by the power of God as we correctly use the gifts from the Spirit." **As our weapon.** Only one who is pure and holy can use righteousness as a weapon! Compare *Eph. 6:10-13*. The TEV correctly gives the meaning of the symbolism as: *to attack and to defend ourselves.* Compare *2 Cor. 10:4-5*.

⁸We are honored and disgraced; we are insulted and praised. We are treated as liars, yet we speak the truth; ⁹as unknown, yet we are known by all; as though we were dead, but, as you see, we live on. Although punished, we are not killed; ¹⁰although saddened, we are always glad; we seem poor, but we make many people rich; we seem to have nothing, yet we really possess everything.

¹¹Dear friends in Corinth! We have spoken frankly to you, we have opened wide our hearts.

¹²We have not closed our hearts to you; it is you who have closed your hearts to us. ¹³I speak now as though you were my children: show us the same feelings that we have for you. Open wide your hearts!

Warning against Pagan Influences

¹⁴Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and

through glory and dishonor, 8
praise and blame; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as un- 9
known; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always 10
rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing everything.

We have spoken freely to 11
you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our 12
affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange—I 13
speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

Do Not Be Yoked with Unbelievers

Do not be yoked together 14
with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light

8. **We are.** Paul shows the paradox of his service to Christ. People respond differently to his work of preaching Christ. [*MacKnight* sees in this the fact that Paul neither becomes conceited nor discouraged.]

9. **As unknown.** In this verse Paul seems to contrast outward appearance with actual fact. Some said Paul's sufferings proved he was *unknown to God*. But *in fact*, he is known by God (authenticated). Some said he was *dead*, because he constantly *tempted death* by the risks he took in proclaiming the Good News! But *in fact*, he was very much alive! Some saw God's *punishment* in the calamities which came to Paul. Yet, as he says, *we are not killed*, and he takes this as being the *spanking of a father*. [Paul's *painful physical ailment* (2 Cor. 12:7) may be part of what he is thinking about here.]

10. **Although saddened.** See *Heb. 12:11*. **We seem poor.** The false teachers probably said that Paul's poverty showed God's disfavor! But he follows the example of Christ (2 Cor. 8:9). He makes others rich spiritually!!! **Nothing.** He did not have the rank and honor, nor the luxury which the false teachers seized for themselves. But, in Christ, everything was his!!! See *1 Cor. 3:22*.

11. **Dear friends in Corinth!** Paul wants them to know that he has spoken frankly to them in the past, and is doing so now! Paul and the others had opened wide their hearts to the Corinthians, and they were still open!!! If there is an obstacle in Paul's relationship with the Corinthians, he is still open to them and he is still their friend!!!

12. **It is you.** "You do not love me, otherwise you would have stood up for me against the false teachers! If there is any barrier between us, you have built it!"

13. **I speak now.** "You are my spiritual children! I have given myself for you! Will you love me now in return???"

14. **Do not try.** Paul has just told them: "Open wide your hearts!" This phrase has a bad meaning in the Law (*Deut. 11:16*). Too much tolerance would place them in a dangerous situation! Therefore he gives this warning. Paul's warning is: *Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done*. The rest of this section gives examples. This verse is commonly quoted to forbid

darkness live together? ¹⁵How can Christ and the Devil agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶How can God's temple come to terms with pagan idols? For we are the temple of the living God! As God himself has said,

"I will make my home with my people
and live among them;
I will be their God,
and they shall be my people."

¹⁷And so the Lord says,

"You must leave them,
and separate yourselves from them.
Have nothing to do with what is unclean,
and I will accept you.

¹⁸I will be your father,
and you shall be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty."

have with darkness? What ¹⁵
harmony is there between
Christ and Belial? What
does a believer have in com-
mon with an unbeliever?
What agreement is there be- ¹⁶
tween the temple of God and
idols? For we are the temple
of the living God. As God
has said:

"I will live with them and
walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my
people."

"Therefore come out from ¹⁷
them
and be separate,

says the Lord,
Touch no unclean thing,
and I will receive you."

"I will be a Father to you, ¹⁸
and you will be my sons
and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty."

marriage with non-Christians. But it would better suit the context to understand the *unbelievers* to be the false teachers and their followers, and Paul's instruction to mean avoiding fellowship with them. See *1 Cor. 5:9-13* and notes. Paul asks five questions to show how absurd it would be to form a bond with those who do not share The Faith. **Right and wrong?** One excludes the other! **Light and darkness?** Darkness is the absence of light. Paul's opponents at Corinth called themselves "servants of light," but their lives showed their darkness!

15. Christ and the Devil. It would be unthinkable to expect Christ and the Devil to work together (but some are saying this now)! [Belial is a name for the Devil, which appears in late Jewish literature, especially the Dead Sea Scrolls. It has much the same meaning as the Enemy of Christ.] **Believer . . . unbeliever.** The Christian has tasted heaven's gift, but the false teachers had renounced it! See *Heb. 6:4-6*.

16. God's temple . . . pagan idols. The Dead Sea Scrolls use *idol* to mean any temptation to sin. Paul identifies the temple of God as we! Compare *1 Cor. 3:16-17; 10:14-22* and notes. **As God himself.** Paul paraphrases *Lev. 26:12; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 37:27* to show that God now makes his home in the messianic community (church). Compare *Eph. 2:20-22*.

17. And so. Paul paraphrases *Isa. 52:11* to show they must separate themselves from the false teachers who make the messianic community (church) *unclean* by their unholy conduct and their distorted teaching! **And I will accept you.** This phrase comes from *Ezek. 20:34*. God will accept all who follow him!!!

18. I will be. Paul paraphrases *2 Sam. 7:14*. Paul is saying that this promise is fulfilled in the church (messianic community)! [The Dead Sea Scrolls quote this often, showing that the Qumran community believed the promise came true in them.] **Sons and daughters.** *Sons* commonly includes *daughters* as well. Paul specifically mentions them here, as does Joel's prophecy (see *Acts 2:17*). Women formed an important part of the church at Corinth.

7 All these promises are made to us, my dear friends. So then, let us purify ourselves from everything that makes body or soul unclean, and let us be completely holy, by living in the fear of God.

Paul's Joy

²Make room for us in your hearts. We have done wrong to no one, we have ruined no one, nor tried to take advantage of anyone. ³I do not say this to condemn you; for, as I have said before, you are so dear to us that we are together always, whether we live or die. ⁴I am so sure of you, I take such pride in you! In all our troubles I am still full of courage, I am running over with joy.

⁵Even after we arrived in Macedonia we did not have any rest. There were troubles everywhere, quarrels with others, fears in our hearts. ⁶But God, who encourages the downhearted,

7 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, and let us strive for perfection out of reverence for God.

Paul's Joy

Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn — conflicts on the outside, fears within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of

1. **Are made to us.** "Since God makes us all these promises, we ought to jump into action!" Let us purify. "Since we are God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17), we must make ourselves pure by separating ourselves from everything that makes body or soul unclean!" Body and soul form a *unity*, and the sin that makes one unclean, also makes the other unclean. Some claimed that the soul was untouched by the guilt of sin which the body committed. **Fear** = reverence, respect, and includes obedience.

2. **Make room.** It is not possible for the Corinthians and Paul to be friends as long as they listen to the slander of the false teachers against him! but **THEY** must act to make room in their hearts for Paul and the other true servants of Christ! **Done wrong to no one.** Paul is thinking about the painful letter. *Verse 12* implies that someone at Corinth led a rebellion against Paul. Paul's letter must have touched a *sore spot*. **Ruined no one.** The false teachers may have accused Paul of ruining people by his teaching and his example. Perhaps they felt he had ruined them!!! **To take advantage.** This implies that some had accused him of *draining the church treasury*. See 2 Cor. 12:17.

3. **I do not say this.** "I do not say this to condemn you for allowing yourselves to be misled by the false teachers, or to stir up past problems! As I said before, *we have opened wide our hearts to you!* Our fellowship in Christ is too important to allow anything to destroy it!!!"

4. **So sure of you!** The news from Titus has made him jubilant!!! See *verse 6*.

5. **Even after.** Note that Paul picks up the thought he dropped in 2 Cor. 2:13. When Titus did not meet Paul at Troas, he may have been afraid that Corinth had rejected his letter and that some special problem kept Titus there. Paul also faced opposition from unbelievers, as he always seemed to do.

6. **But God.** Note how Paul always gives God the credit for what happens! How happy it made Paul to hear the good news about improved conditions at Corinth!!!

encouraged us with the coming of Titus. ⁷It was not only his coming, but also his report of how you encouraged him. He told us how much you want to see me, how sorry you are, how ready you are to defend me; and so I am even happier now.

⁸For even if that letter of mine made you sad, I am not sorry I wrote it. I could have been sorry about it when I saw that the letter made you sad for a while. ⁹But now I am happy—not because I made you sad, but because your sadness made you change your ways. That sadness was used by God, and so we caused you no harm. ¹⁰For the sadness that is used by God brings a change of heart that leads to salvation—and there is no regret in that! But worldly sadness causes death. ¹¹See what God did with this sadness of yours: how earnest it has made you, how eager to prove your innocence! Such indignation, such alarm, such feelings, such devotion, such readiness to

Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your affection, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what affection, what concern, what readiness to see justice

7. **But also his report.** Titus may have had doubts about his mission to Corinth, knowing the problems which Paul had in the *painful visit* (2 Cor. 2:1). He was much encouraged to learn the improved attitude of the Corinthians! **To see me.** They sincerely wanted him to be with them! **How sorry.** They deeply regretted their past actions! Compare *verse 10*. **To defend me.** They still had deep feelings for Paul, and were ready to take his part against the false teachers! **Even happier.** If the arrival of Titus made Paul happy, the good report made him even happier!

8. **If that letter.** The letter of 2 Cor. 2:4. **I am not sorry.** "It was necessary that I write this strongly worded letter to you!" **I could have been sorry.** "Please don't think it made me happy to humiliate you! It made me sad to do it, but it was for your own good."

9. **But because.** "Here is why I am happy: it made you change your ways!" **Was used by God.** *Verse 10* explains this.

10. **For the sadness.** "God is able to use the sadness that regrets actions which were contrary to God, to change our heart and bring us to himself! The Corinthians were sad because their actions against Paul had also been against God. Change our heart = repent = turn *from sin to God*. **Worldly sadness.** This produces only guilt, and does not change our hearts. Contrast Peter and Judas. Peter regretted his action in denying Jesus, and God used this to make him repent. Judas regretted the results of his action, and the Devil used this guilt to drive him to suicide! Some make the mistake of trying to *drive* people to God by using the guilt of worldly sadness!

11. **See what God did!** Paul gives God the credit for the *change of heart* which the Corinthian Christians have made. Paul examines the signs which show that they have repented of past sins. Repent = reform! **Innocence!** They *clear themselves* by doing as Paul had instructed. **Indignation!** Probably toward the chief troublemaker (2 Cor. 2:5). **Alarm!** They were a little afraid of what Paul might do to them. Compare *Acts 13:11*. **Feelings!** They deeply wanted to restore their friendship with Paul. **Devotion!** They were ready now to protect Paul's honor and reputation. **To punish!** Their zeal to punish the one

punish wrongdoing! You have shown yourselves to be without fault in the whole matter.

¹²So, even though I wrote that letter, it was not because of the one who did wrong, or the one who was wronged. Instead, I wrote it to make plain to you, in God's sight, how deep is your devotion to us. ¹³That is why we were encouraged.

Not only were we encouraged; how happy Titus made us with his happiness over the way in which all of you helped to cheer him up. ¹⁴I did boast of you to him, and you have not disappointed me. We have always spoken the truth to you. In the same way, the boast we made to Titus has proved true. ¹⁵And so his love for you grows stronger, as he remembers how all of you were ready to obey, how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶How happy I am that I can depend on you completely!

Christian Giving

8 We want you to know, brothers, what God's grace has done in the churches in Mace-

done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. So ¹²even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. By all ¹³this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because all of you helped put his mind at ease. I had boasted to him ¹⁴about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. And his affection for you is all the ¹⁵greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. I am glad I can ¹⁶have complete confidence in you.

Generosity Encouraged

8 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given

who had insulted Paul was so strong, in fact, that it was necessary to ask them to forgive the man (2 Cor. 2:5-8). **You have shown yourselves.** They did not argue with Paul's demands, but demonstrated their faith by their action.

12. It was not. "I do not want you to misunderstand why I wrote that letter. Although it may have seemed harsh, there was no thought of taking revenge." **Instead.** "I wrote to test you (2 Cor. 2:9) and to make you yourselves AWARE of how you actually felt in this matter! This crisis could only be resolved when you demonstrated your love and devotion for me as a true apostle."

13. That is why. Paul is much encouraged by the evidence of repentance which the Corinthians have demonstrated! **Titus.** Both Titus and Paul are servants of the same Lord! When Titus was made happy, Paul was made happy also!

14. I did boast of you. After the *painful visit* of 2 Cor. 2:1, it may surprise us that Paul would boast of them. But Paul's love for them looks beyond the moment, and sees the good! Some let present problems blind them to the real value of a person. Paul did not do that!!!

15. And so his love. Titus remembers well their spirit of faith!!!

16. How happy! They have passed the test! Compare *verse 4*.

Note: Chapters 8-9 are the most complete discussion of *Christian giving* in the New Testament. *Gal. 2:1-10* implies a working-agreement between the Jewish and Gentile churches. This showed a *new spirit* among the Christians (see *Acts 11:29*). The Christians in Judea may have suffered more money problems than those in other areas (compare note on *Acts 2:44-45*). Probably the persecution

donia. ²They have been severely tested by the troubles they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they were very poor. ³I assure you, they gave as much as they could, and even more than they could. Of their own free will ⁴they begged us and insisted on the privilege of having a part in helping God's people in Judea. ⁵It was more than we could have hoped for! First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God's will, they gave themselves to us as well. ⁶So we urged Titus, who began this work, to continue it and help you complete this special service of love. ⁷You are so rich in all you have: in faith, speech, and knowledge, in your eagerness to help, and in your love for us. And so we want you to be generous also in this service of love.

the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

was more severe. More than one gift of money was taken to the poor Christians in Judea. Almost a year had passed since Paul asked the Corinthians to contribute to this need (*1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:10*), but they have not fulfilled their commitment. Paul is obviously concerned about the Christian poor in Judea, but he also sees this as an opportunity to *unify* more strongly, the Gentile and Jewish elements of the church of Christ!

1. **What God's grace.** Paul points to the good example of the churches in Macedonia, but is careful to give God the glory! Macedonia would include Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica, etc. The Corinthians had at first been eager to help, and Paul had boasted about them to the churches in Macedonia (*2 Cor. 9:2*). But these have completed their collection, while the Corinthians lag behind.

2. **Severely tested.** Compare *1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; 3:3-9*. **Extremely generous.** "In spite of the fact that they themselves were very poor (which could be used as an excuse to do nothing) they were extremely generous in the money they were sending to help the Christian poor.

3. **And even more.** "They outdid themselves in their giving, and it was of their own free will!"

4. **They begged us.** "This is how eager they were to have a part in this good work, and they looked at it as being a privilege!" As Jesus freely gave himself, so Christians are to share with needy brothers and sisters! [*Saints*: see note on *1 Cor. 6:11*.]

5. **It was more!** They did more than Paul could expect them to do! **First . . . then.** Their Christian giving grew out of the fact that they had already given themselves as *living sacrifices* to Christ! Compare *Röm. 12:1-2*. *If you can reach a man's mind, you can reach his heart, and through it his pocketbook, and when you have reached his pocketbook, you have captured the whole man. You cannot buy that kind of dedication!!!*

6. **So we urged Titus.** Titus has just come from Corinth, but Paul is sending him back there, to complete this *raising of money* to help the poor. Paul is careful just how he words this, calling it a special service of love. Some accused him of *draining the treasury* (*2 Cor. 12:17*).

7. **You are so rich.** "You are a gifted church, rich in spiritual things (*1 Cor. 1:4-5*)." Paul implies they should be the one to set the example for everyone else!

⁸I am not laying down any rules. But by showing how eager others are to help, I am trying to find out how real your own love is. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; rich as he was, he made himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of his poverty.

¹⁰This is my opinion on the matter: it is better for you to finish now what you began last year. You were the first, not only to act, but also to be willing to act. ¹¹On with it, then, and finish the job! Be as eager to finish it as you were to plan it, and do it with what you have. ¹²If you are eager to give, God will accept your gift on the basis of what you have to give, not on what you don't have.

¹³⁻¹⁴I am not trying to relieve others by putting a burden on you; but since you have plenty at this time, it is only fair that you should help those who are in need. Then, when you are in need and they have plenty, they will help you. In this

I am not commanding ⁸ you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you ⁹ know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

And here is my advice ¹⁰ about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish ¹¹ work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness ¹² is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

Our desire is not that ¹³ others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time ¹⁴ your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be

8. **Any rules.** "I do not command you to do this. This must be a work of love, and so voluntary." To find out. "The example of the Macedonian churches has given me the courage to ask you to do this, and what you do will demonstrate the reality of your love!"

9. **For you know.** "Think of the example which Christ set for us!" Compare *Phil. 2:5-11*.

10. **My opinion.** Not a command, but advice. **It is better.** If they don't finish this now, they will have lost something by neglect. **What you began last year.** They had started in a burst of spontaneous enthusiasm! Probably the false teachers had tried to talk them out of it.

11. **On with it, then!** The TEV brings out the emphatic now! "You volunteered and made a beginning of it. Finish it up!!!"

12. **Eager.** "Don't put it off, saying that you will have more in the future from which to give! If you are eager to show your love, God will accept your gift because of what you have to give, not because of what may come to you in the future!"

13-14. **By putting a burden on you.** A false teacher may have said this collection was a Jewish attempt to make themselves rich from the generosity of the Gentile churches! Compare *2 Cor. 12:16-18*. **Treated equally.** Paul says this in a different way in *Rom. 15:27*. This sharing was a characteristic of the early church (*Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35*). Paul sees it as being *treated equally* for Corinth (who has plenty) to share with those who are in need. If at some point in the future, it is Corinth in need, others will share with them!

way both are treated equally. ¹⁵As the scripture says,

"The man who gathered much did not have too much, and the man who gathered little did not have too little."

Titus and His Companions

¹⁶How we thank God for making Titus as eager as we are to help you! ¹⁷Not only did he welcome our request; he was so eager to help that of his own free will he decided to go to you. ¹⁸With him we are sending the brother who is highly respected in all the churches for his work in preaching the gospel. ¹⁹And besides that, he has been chosen and appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this service of love for the Lord's glory, and to show that we want to help.

²⁰We are being careful not to stir up any complaints about the way we handle this generous gift. ²¹Our purpose is to do what is right, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

²²So we are sending our brother with them; we have tested him many times, and found him always very eager to help. And now that he has so much confidence in you, he is all the more

equality, as it is written: 15

"He that gathered much did not have too much, and he that gathered little did not have too little."

Titus Sent to Corinth

I thank God, who put into 16 the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. For 17 Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. And we are sending along 18 with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. What is more, he was chosen 19 by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking 21 pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

In addition, we are send- 22 ing with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confi-

15. *As the scripture says. Exod. 16:18.* Paul uses this to show a Bible basis for Christians to share resources. Christian love will prevent either waste or shortage.

16. *How we thank God!* Paul gives God the credit for Titus' eagerness. Starting here, Paul gives the credentials of the three who were to complete the collection.

17. *Not only.* Paul did suggest this to Titus (*verse 6*), but Titus volunteered to go!

18-19. *With him.* We do not know why Paul does not give the names of these two. Perhaps they are some of those mentioned in *Acts 20:4*. See *verse 22* for the second unnamed brother. These will go with Paul to Jerusalem with the money.

20. *Not to stir up.* "I suggested to the churches that they send messengers with me to Jerusalem, so that we will not stir up any complaints about the way this generous gift of money is handled." Paul seems sensitive about this. Compare *2 Cor. 11:8-9*.

21. *Not only.* "I want to do right in the Lord's sight, and as much as possible, I want to avoid any suspicion of misconduct, which would make me less useful in the service of Christ."

22. *So we are sending.* This is the second unnamed brother. See *verse 18*. He shares Titus' enthusiasm!

eager to help. ²³As for Titus, he is my partner who works with me to help you; as for the other brothers who are going with him, they represent the churches and bring glory to Christ. ²⁴Show your love to them, so that all the churches will be sure of it and know that we are right in boasting of you.

Help for Fellow Christians

9 There is really no need for me to write you about the help being sent to God's people in Judea. ²I know that you are willing to help, and I have boasted of you to the people in Macedonia. "The brothers in Greece," I said, "have been ready to help since last year." Your eagerness has stirred up most of them. ³Now I am sending these brothers, so that our boasting of you in this matter may not turn out to be empty words. But, just as I said, you will be ready with your help. ⁴Or else, if the people from Macedonia should come with me and find out that you are not ready, how ashamed we would be—not to speak of your shame—for feeling so sure of

dence in you. As for Titus, ²³ he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. Therefore, show these men ²⁴ the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that all the churches can see it.

9 There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. For I ² know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. But I am ³ sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and ⁴ find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of

23. He is my partner. Paul gives Titus a good recommendation! Paul certifies to Corinth that these brothers are *authentic*. Many false prophets were victimizing the churches.

24. Show your love to them. These men will eventually report back to the churches they represent. The conduct of the Corinthian church will be proof of all the good things Paul has said about them!

1. Really no need. Paul is still anxious about the situation at Corinth. It will be embarrassing if he arrives at Corinth with the brothers from Macedonia, and things are not ready! Even though there is really no need to write about this, he still wants to hurry them up, so they will have finished this collection long before he arrives.

2. I have boasted. Paul gives the exact words he used in his boast about them. Achaia is the Roman name for Greece. Corinth's eagerness had stirred up a *healthy rivalry* among the Macedonian churches.

3. Now I am sending. Paul is sending the three brothers he spoke about in the previous chapter. They will go on ahead to be sure everything is ready. Paul does not want his boast to become only empty words, and so make him ashamed.

4. And find out. "We would all be ashamed, if we came and found you unprepared!"

you! ⁵So I thought it necessary to urge these brothers to go to you ahead of me and get ready in advance the gift you promised to make. Then it will be ready when I arrive, and it will show that you give because you want to, not because you have to.

⁶Remember this: the man who plants few seeds will have a small crop; the one who plants many seeds will have a large crop. ⁷Each one should give, then, as he has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. ⁸And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. ⁹As the scripture says,

“He gives generously to the poor;
his kindness lasts forever.”

¹⁰And God, who supplies seed for the sower and bread to eat, will also supply you with all the seed you need and make it grow, to produce a rich

having been so confident. So ⁵
I thought it necessary to urge
the brothers to visit you in
advance and finish the ar-
rangements for the generous
gift you had promised. Then
it will be ready as a gener-
ous gift, not as one grudg-
ingly given.

Sowing Generously

Remember this: Whoever ⁶
sows sparingly will also reap
sparingly, and whoever sows
generously will also reap
generously. Each man ⁷
should give what he has de-
cided in his heart to give,
not reluctantly or under
compulsion, for God loves a
cheerful giver. And God is ⁸
able to make all grace ab-
ound to you, so that in all
things at all times, having all
that you need, you will
abound in every good work.
As it is written: ⁹

“He has scattered abroad
his gifts to the poor;
his righteousness en-
dures for ever.”

Now he who supplies seed ¹⁰
to the sower and bread for
food will also supply and in-
crease your store of seed and
will enlarge the harvest of

5. **So I thought it necessary.** Paul seems to be saying that they have wasted too much time already! Because you want to. It is important that this be a gift out of their free will, not something they are forced into!

6. **Remember this.** Christian giving is not a sacrifice, but a planting. Paul is probably quoting a popular proverb. Results are in proportion to effort.

7. **As he has decided.** Note that Paul sets no standard amount. It is what each one decides after thinking it over, not something done in a burst of emotion, or with a feeling of being pushed into it. **Who gives gladly.** What they do, will be of their own free will, out of love! This is what God wants!

8. **And God.** It is a general rule that you should not withhold your Christian giving just because you think *hard times* may come. Since the Christian is a *proxy* of God's grace, the supply does not run out! The one who gives in proportion to what he has, will be blessed by it! But Paul does not mean to say that Christians can become rich in money, by giving it all away. Compare the Parable of the Shrewd Manager (*Luke 16:1-12* and notes).

9. **As the scripture says.** *Psalm 112:9.* Paul uses this to prove what he said in *verse 8.* The benevolent man gives generously to the poor.

10. **And God.** The farmer depends on God. When the farmer plants seed in his field, God makes it grow, and gives him even more seed to plant the next time. The same thing is true in Christian giving.

harvest from your generosity. ¹¹He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times, so that many will thank God for your gifts they receive from us. ¹²For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an outpouring of grateful thanks to God. ¹³And because of the proof which this service of yours brings, many will give glory to God for your loyalty to the gospel of Christ, which you profess, and for your generosity in sharing with them and all others. ¹⁴And so they will pray for you with great affection for you because of the extraordinary grace God has shown you. ¹⁵Let us thank God for his priceless gift!

Paul Defends His Ministry

10 I, Paul, make a personal appeal to you—I who am said to be meek and mild when I am with you, but bold toward you when I am away from you. I beg of you, by the gentleness

your righteousness. You will ¹¹ be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

This service that you per- ¹² form is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have pro- ¹³ vided yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And ¹⁴ in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given to you. Thanks be to God for his in- ¹⁵ describable gift!

Paul's Defense of His Ministry

10 By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold"

11. **He will always.** The giver is blessed by God so that he can help others! Compare *verse 8*. But God's blessing cannot be used for selfish reasons!

12. **For this service.** "Your generous gift will supply the things that the Christian poor need, and will honor God by means of the outpouring of grateful thanks to Him!"

13. **And because of the proof.** The proof that the Corinthians are loyal to Christ is their willingness to give. It is likely that the *circumcision party* in Judea did not think the Gentile churches were churches of Christ at all! This gift would help to change attitudes and prove their *oneness* in Christ!

14. **And so.** Paul's goal was to unite Jewish and Gentile Christians in one common fellowship. Compare notes on *Acts 21:11-14*. This Gentile gift would produce love in Jewish hearts. *Josephus* says that by the end of the first century, one-third of the Jews had become Christians!!!

15. **For his priceless gift!** This gift is Jesus Christ himself (*John 3:16*), who is the source of all other gifts, and who unites Jew and Gentile in one church!!!

1. **I, Paul.** With this verse, Paul begins a strong warning to the false teacher (or teachers) and the group that followed him. Up to this point, he had been writing to those who accepted him as an apostle. He begins his defence with an emphatic statement of authority: *I, Paul! I who am said to be.* The false teacher (or teachers) made fun of Paul's *strongly worded letter* and said he could talk big when he was not there, but was meek and mild when he faced his opposition. The faction believed harshness and arrogance was the mark of a true apostle, so they made fun of Paul's weakness and trembling (see *1 Cor. 2:3* and note). **I beg of you.** Even now Paul does not *command* them, but tries to persuade them. Gentleness and kindness are two characteristics of Christ himself, and every Christian must imitate these!!!

and kindness of Christ: ²Do not force me to be bold with you when I come; for I am sure I can be bold with those who say that we act from worldly motives. ³It is true that we live in the world; but we do not fight from worldly motives. ⁴The weapons we use in our fight are not the world's weapons, but God's powerful weapons, with which to destroy strongholds. We destroy false arguments; ⁵we pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obey Christ. ⁶And after you have proved your complete loyalty, we will be ready to punish any act of disloyalty.

⁷You are looking at things as they are on the outside. Is there someone there who reckons himself to belong to Christ? Well, let him think again about himself, because we belong to Christ

when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to tear down strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

You are looking only on the surface of things. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much

2. **Do not force me.** "If you continue your present actions, I will be forced to take harsh measures with you when I come in person!" **Worldly motives.** This group accused Paul of the things they themselves were doing. Because Paul did not talk like a politician (2 Cor. 11:6), and because he was meek and mild, they said he was no true apostle and did not have the Spirit.

3. **It is true.** "While it is true that we live in the world, it is not at all true that we fight against idolaters and unbelievers from worldly motives!" Compare *John 17:15* and note.

4. **The weapons.** Paul likes to compare his service to Christ with a military campaign. Christ, his ministry, and his cross all seem weak to the worldly man (1 Cor. 1:18-25). But God chose "what the world considers nonsense" to put to shame the powerful men of this world (1 Cor. 1:27). **God's weapons.** All along, Paul has been using God's weapons (such as gentleness, kindness, love, etc.) which will destroy strongholds! Paul's opponents do not understand this! **False arguments.** What is this evil power that Paul fights against??? **Unbelief!** Satan captured Eve by persuading her to disbelieve what God said (1 Tim. 2:14). False arguments cause excessive pride and make people deaf to the truth!

5. **Every proud obstacle.** This is human pride, human wisdom, things erected as a wall against God. These grow out of worldly motives! Compare 1 John 2:16. **Every thought.** Paul wants to do more than win arguments. He wants to take every thought captive through faith, and make it obey Christ! Christ-on-the-cross, the evidence of God's love, is the only *weapon* which can win man's loyalty!!! Therefore, Paul does not use the human methods the false teachers expect, but comes in the "weakness" which Christ demonstrated.

6. **And after.** "I do not want to come to Corinth until you have had time to prove your complete loyalty to me as an apostle of Christ. When I do come, I will take harsh measures with any who are still disloyal."

7. **On the outside.** "Don't let anyone's claim to authority keep you from seeing that I am an apostle. You have been looking at external things, and you are confused by this and don't really know who does belong to Christ!" **Is there someone there?** "If someone is claiming to be the servant of Christ, so am I, just as much as he is! But my claims have more proof!" [It may be these false teachers formed a "Christ party" (1 Cor. 1:12), and that their *claim to fame* was that they had seen Jesus in his life on earth.]

just as much as he does. ⁸For I am not ashamed, even if I have boasted somewhat too much of the authority that the Lord has given us—authority to build you up, that is, not to tear you down. ⁹I do not want it to appear that I am trying to frighten you with my letters. ¹⁰Someone will say, "Paul's letters are severe and strong, but when he is with us in person he is weak, and his words are nothing!" ¹¹Such a person must understand that there is no difference between what we write in our letters when we are away, and what we will do when we are there with you.

¹²Of course we would not dare classify ourselves or compare ourselves with those who rate themselves so highly. How stupid they are! They make up their own standards to measure themselves by, and judge themselves by their own standards! ¹³As for us, however, our boasting will not go beyond certain limits; it will stay within the limits of the work which God has set for us, which includes our work among you. ¹⁴And since you are within those limits, we did not go beyond them when we came to you, bringing the

as he. For even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down, I will not be ashamed of it. I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you. We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.

8. **For I am not ashamed.** "I have made no threat that I cannot fulfill! When I come in person, I will make everything I said in that letter come true!" **To build you up.** No apostle would work to destroy the church, as these have done! Paul's mission is to *build up*, although he also has the ability to destroy (*Acts 13:11*).

9. **To appear.** Paul writes, not to frighten them, but to build them up! Compare *Gal. 4:20*.

10. **Someone will say.** This is what his opponents were saying. Tradition makes Paul small, bald, and with a big nose. He did not make a strong impression in person. The false teachers used this fact to try to discredit him as an apostle. Because Paul did not speak with eloquence (*1 Cor. 2:1-5* and notes), they said he did not have the Holy Spirit.

11. **Such a person.** "If I come and find you still disloyal, you will discover that I am *in person* just as strong as my letters!"

12. **Of course.** Paul speaks in irony. It was confusing to the Corinthians that the false teachers and Paul each used different standards to measure by. Paul now examines this fact. **How stupid they are!** "They make up their own standards, and say 'See! We are the true apostles!' But measure them by the Lord's standards!"

13. **As for us.** "We will not go beyond the limits which God has set." He has not seized authority over the Corinthians, like a church-Boss! God himself appointed Paul apostle to the Gentiles.

14. **And since you are within.** Paul was working within God's limits when he planted the church at Corinth. In contrast, the false teachers had not been sent by God!

Good News about Christ. ¹⁵So we do not boast of the work that others have done beyond the limits God set for us. Instead, we hope that your faith may grow, and that we may be able to do a much greater work among you, always within the limits that God has set. ¹⁶Then we can preach the Good News in other countries beyond you, and shall not have to boast of work already done in another man's field.

¹⁷But as the scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast, must boast of what the Lord has done."

¹⁸Because a man is really approved when the Lord thinks well of him, not when he thinks well of himself.

Paul and the False Apostles

11 I wish you would tolerate me, even when I am a bit foolish. Please do! ²I am jealous for you just as God is; you are like a pure virgin whom I have promised in marriage to one man

Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory. But, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." For it is not the man who commends himself who is approved, but the man whom the Lord commends.

Paul and the False Apostles

11 I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure

15. **So we do not boast.** Paul's work was to *lay foundations*. He did not intrude on the work of the other apostles. See *Rom. 15:20* and note. It may be that the false teachers accused Paul of intruding on *their work*, when it was in fact they themselves who were the intruders! **That we may be able.** These problems are forcing Paul to concentrate his efforts on them, and neglect other things that need to be done. When their faith grows, he can leave them in the care of their ordinary teachers, and go on to other fields of work.

16. **Then we.** (1) It was the special mission of the apostles to proclaim the Good News in areas where it had not yet gone; (2) They were not to neglect any country, but to proceed from country to country. The false apostle had come directly from Judea to Corinth, and may have expected to make himself rich by staying there. He boasted of work that Paul himself had already done! God's work for Paul and the true apostles was to be *pioneers!* [But there is a need to *water* (*1 Cor. 3:6*)!]

17. **But as.** Paul paraphrases *Jer. 9:23-24*. Compare *1 Cor. 1:31*. *MacKnight* understands this: "If, then, any teacher boasteth, let him boast of his having performed his duty in the manner the Lord hath appointed."

18. **Because.** The real proof of being approved, is that the Lord thinks well of you. The false apostle had failed the test by not following God's instructions on the mission field!

1. **Tolerate me.** There is still a possibility that the false apostles may deceive the Corinthians with their claims that *seem reasonable* by worldly standards. Two key words are *foolish* (*fools*) and *boasting* (*boast*). Since the false apostles said he was being foolish to boast about himself being an apostle, Paul uses their own language.

2. **Just as God is.** Paul feels the same jealousy which God feels (*Exod. 20:5*) because in converting them to Christ he had promised them in marriage to *one man only*, that is, to Christ. Compare *Rev. 19:7-9*. Paul's godly jealousy stands in contrast to the human jealousy of the false apostles (compare *Gal. 4:17*). **Promised in marriage.** See note on *Matt. 1:18*.

only, who is Christ. ³I am afraid that your minds will be corrupted and that you will abandon your full and pure devotion to Christ—in the same way that Eve was deceived by the snake's clever lies. ⁴For you gladly tolerate anyone who comes to you and preaches a different Jesus, not the one we preached; and you accept a spirit and a gospel completely different from the Spirit and the gospel you received from us!

⁵I do not think that I am the least bit inferior to those very special "apostles" of yours! ⁶Perhaps I am an amateur in speaking, but certainly not in knowledge; we have made this clear to you at all times and in all conditions.

⁷I did not charge you a thing when I preached the Good News of God to you; I humbled myself in order to make you important. Was that wrong of me? ⁸While I was working among you I was paid by other churches. I was robbing them, so

virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

⁷ Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? ⁸ I robbed other churches by receiving support from them

3. **I am afraid.** "I am afraid, that as the snake deceived Eve and led her into sin (*Gen. ch 3*), so your minds will be corrupted by false arguments and you will abandon your full and pure devotion to Christ and be guilty of spiritual immorality!" [Note Paul believes the account of Adam and Eve.]

4. **For you gladly tolerate.** Compare this with *verse 1*. Human nature loves new things (*Acts 17:21*), and this makes Paul afraid that they will adopt this new message which is phony (not genuine, but a distortion). [Sometimes, however, people are so rooted in *tradition*, that they reject **PURE TRUTH** because it seems new to them (because they never heard it before).]

5. **The least bit inferior!** Paul has proved himself by his loyalty to Christ-on-the-cross! He has the Holy Spirit, but the false apostles do not! It is almost certain that the false apostles (and the *circumcision party*???) preached a "Jesus without the cross." As a true apostle, Paul is in no way inferior to such as these!!!

6. **An amateur in speaking.** Paul was not a gifted orator, as these men must have been. Yet he has *true knowledge*, and is in no way inferior to anyone! He has made this clear by his teaching and by the *gifts from the Spirit* which he gave to them.

7. **Charge you a thing.** Paul would accept no pay from the Corinthians when he planted the church there. The false apostles said this proved he was not an apostle. Paul says that he humbled himself to make them important! Compare *Acts 18:3; 1 Cor. 9:15* and notes.

8. **I was paid by other churches.** Paul has been accused over the very thing he did for their own good! He did not take money from them to avoid even a hint of suspicion that he acted from worldly motives!!! But it was proper for an established congregation to support him (*Phil. 4:15-17*).

to speak, to help you. ⁹And during the time I was with you I did not bother you for help when I needed money; the brothers who came from Macedonia brought me everything I needed. As in the past, so in the future: I will never be a burden to you! ¹⁰By Christ's truth in me, I promise that this boast of mine will not be silenced anywhere in all of Greece. ¹¹Why do I say this? Because I don't love you? God knows I do!

¹²I will go on doing what I am doing now, in order to keep those other "apostles" from having any reason for boasting and saying that they work in the same way that we do. ¹³Those men are not true apostles—they are false apostles, who lie about their work and change themselves to look like real apostles of Christ. ¹⁴Well, no wonder! Even Satan can change himself to look like an angel of light! ¹⁵So it is no great thing if his servants change themselves to look like servants of right. In the end they will get exactly what they deserve for the things they do.

so as to serve you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

9. I did not bother you for help. Paul has already mentioned the generosity of the Macedonian churches (2 Cor. 8:1-2). Paul must have been in desperate need during his initial work at Corinth, and these brothers supplied his need.

10. By Christ's truth in me. This is a strong affirmation of what he says!!! Conditions at Corinth make it important that he does not allow them to give him money to live on!

11. Why do I say this? When Paul refused to be paid by the Corinthian church, the false apostles said it proved he did not love them! But Paul does love them and affirms it by saying that *God knows I do!* Since Paul was paid by other churches, what he did here at Corinth must have been to destroy the claims of the false teachers.

12. In order to. The false apostles were making themselves rich off the church! Since they will be compared to Paul, they feel they must discredit him. But if he allowed Corinth to pay him, he would be doing his opponents a favor!!!

13. They are false apostles. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "This speedy appearance of false teachers was one of the most remarkable features of the Apostolic age; compare Gal. 2:4; Phil. 1:15; 1 John 4:1, crafty workers (compare Phil. 3:2), fashioning themselves into Apostles of Christ, i.e., laying special claim to that great title (compare 2 Cor. 10:7)." The heresies of today are really as old as the first century. See Introduction to the Letter From James.

14. Even Satan! A Jewish legend said that Satan once took the form of an *angel of light* and joined other angels in singing praises to God; and that Eve in the garden saw him as he "bent over the wall." The point is that evil can counterfeit good.

15. If his servants. Paul says Satan's servants are trying to deceive the church! Then the false apostles are *Satan's servants*!!! Compare 1 John 2:18-19 and notes.

Paul's Sufferings as an Apostle

¹⁶I repeat: no one should think that I am a fool. But if you do, at least accept me as a fool, just so I will have a little to boast of. ¹⁷Of course what I am saying now is not what the Lord would have me say; in this matter of boasting I am really talking like a fool. ¹⁸But since there are so many who boast for merely human reasons, I will do the same. ¹⁹You yourselves are so wise, and so you gladly tolerate fools! ²⁰You tolerate anyone who orders you around, or takes advantage of you, or traps you, or looks down on you, or slaps you in the face. ²¹I am ashamed to admit it: we were too timid to do that!

But if anyone dares to boast of something—I am talking like a fool—I will be just as daring. ²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³Are they Christ's servant's? I sound like a madman—but I am a better servant than they are! I have worked much harder, I have been in prison more times, I have been whipped much more, and I have been near death more often.

Paul Boasts About His Sufferings

I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

What anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged

16. **I repeat.** "Bear with me as I boast a little bit, and see if I have as much to boast about as those false apostles!"

17. **Not what the Lord.** Paul is not now disobeying the Lord!!! What he is doing is to argue from a human point of view as the false apostles have done. In doing this, he *is* talking like a fool (which they have accused him of being).

18. **I will do the same.** "I can boast about worldly things also!" See verse 30.

19. **Are so wise.** He speaks in irony. Compare *1 Cor. 4:10* and note.

20. **You tolerate anyone.** "You certainly have great patience! You tolerate these false apostles when they take your money to support themselves in luxury, and you tolerate them when they give you a *hard time!*"

21. **We were too timid!** "What a shame! I was too timid to treat you like that!" **Just as daring.** He now boasts on their own level.

22. **Hebrews?** This means a Jew who preserved his national language and customs, a kind of *super-patriot*. Compare note on *Acts 9:1*. **Israelites?** One of God's own people. Compare *Rom. 9:4; 11:1*. **Abraham's.** The messianic promise came through Abraham. Paul is completely Jewish in every sense of the word!

23. **Christ's servants?** They called themselves both *apostles of Christ* and *servants of Christ* (verse 13). **Like a madman.** This implies that while they think they are wise, all they really understand is the babbling of madmen, and Paul must come down to their level to be understood. Paul now gives us an amazing picture of his life and work as an apostle of Christ!!!

²⁴Five times I was given the thirty-nine lashes by the Jews; ²⁵three times I was whipped by the Romans, and once I was stoned; I have been in three shipwrecks, and once I spent twenty-four hours in the water. ²⁶In my many travels I have been in danger from floods and from robbers, in danger from fellow Jews and from Gentiles; there have been dangers in the cities, dangers in the wilds, dangers on the high seas, and dangers from false friends. ²⁷There has been work and toil; often I have gone without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty; I have often been without enough food, shelter, or clothing. ²⁸And, not to mention other things, every day I am under the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹When someone is weak, then I feel weak too; when someone is led into sin, I am filled with distress.

³⁰If I must boast, I will boast of things that

more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show

24. **The thirty-nine lashes.** The Law allowed forty lashes (*Deut. 25:1-3*), but they always stopped one short, to avoid breaking the law. *Josephus* says this sometimes caused death. The fact that Paul received this five times, shows that during his ministry there was no final separation between church and synagogue.

25. **Whipped by the Romans.** Compare *Acts 16:22-23*. **Stoned.** *Acts 14:19*. **Three shipwrecks.** A fourth is described in *Acts 27* (at a later date). **Twenty-four hours.** Holding on to some of the wreckage.

26. **In my many travels.** Paul was constantly risking his life in many ways! A few of these experiences are mentioned in the New Testament, but we can only imagine what all Paul endured for the mission he had received from Christ!!!

27. **There has been.** Here he mentions hardships. This is a general picture, and he does not give specific details.

28. **My concern.** As an apostle, Paul had a great concern for *all* the churches, not just Corinth. Compare *2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5*.

29. **When someone.** By this Paul shows how close he feels to each Christian!

30. **That show.** This explains what Paul says in *verse 18*. The weakness of which he has been accused (*2 Cor. 10:10*) is the only proper subject for boasting! In weakness (as the world sees it), Paul is imitating Christ, who died in weakness (*2 Cor. 13:4*).

show how weak I am. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus—blessed be his name forever!—knows that I am not lying. ³²When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas placed guards at the city gates to arrest me. ³³But I was let down in a basket, through an opening in the wall, and escaped from him.

Paul's Visions and Revelations

12 I have to boast, even though it doesn't do any good. But I will now talk about visions and revelations given me by the Lord. ¹I know a certain Christian man who fourteen years ago was snatched up to the highest heaven (I do not know whether this actually happened, or whether he had a vision—only God knows). ²I repeat, I know that this man was snatched to Paradise (again, I do not know whether this actually happened, or whether it was a vision—only God knows), and there he heard things which cannot be put into words, things that human lips may

my weakness. The God and ³¹ Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. ³²In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Paul's Vision and His Thorn

12 I must go on boasting. ¹Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know ² a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up ³ to Paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. ⁴

31. The God and Father. Paul affirms the truth of all these things he has just said, and says God knows he is speaking the truth!!!

32-33. When I was in Damascus. See note on *Acts 9:23*. Paul adds this account as an afterthought. It may be that the false teacher had widely circulated this account, hoping to embarrass Paul with it. Here he sets the record straight! What to them was a laughable situation, is to Paul an example of God's mercy!!! Also, this account being circulated as fact (which it was) would help to increase the credibility of the other things Paul tells about in this chapter.

1. I have to boast. Paul personally feels the whole thing of boasting is a waste of time! Yet he must go on with it, because he must destroy false arguments and pull down proud obstacles. **About visions and revelations.** The false apostles bragged about visions and ecstatic experiences. Paul may have had many such experiences (since as an apostle, he had a special measure of the Holy Spirit), but he spends no time boasting about such things, and it is with regret he mentions this here.

2. Who fourteen years ago. It is a Jewish form to speak in the third person. *Verse 7* identifies this man as Paul. The date must have been in 41 or 42 A.D. (by the corrected calendar). *Johnson* thinks it may have been while Paul was at Antioch or Tarsus (*Acts 9:29-30*.) **Snatched up.** Compare *Rev. 4:1-2; Acts 10:11-17*. **Highest heaven.** Jews called the atmosphere the first heaven; outer space the second heaven; and the highest heaven was the place where God lives. **I do not know.** The TEV correctly translates the idiom. Some see in this proof that Paul believed a *disembodied spirit* had awareness

3. I repeat. Paul uses the word Paradise this time, which is *heaven before the Judgment*. See notes on *Luke 16:19-31*. See also *Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7*.

4. And there he heard things. The false teachers may tell others about their visions and boast of how God spoke to them, but Paul's experience was too sacred to reveal! God does not allow Paul to tell what he saw and heard!!! Compare *Rev. 10:3-4* and notes.

not speak. ⁵So I will boast of this man—but I will not boast about myself, except the things that show how weak I am. ⁶If I wanted to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be telling the truth. But I will not boast, because I do not want anyone to have a higher opinion of me than he has from what he has seen me do and heard me say.

I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

⁷But to keep me from being puffed up with pride because of the many wonderful things I saw, I was given a painful physical ailment, which acts as Satan's messenger to beat me and keep me from being proud. ⁸Three times I prayed to the Lord about this, and asked him to take it away. ⁹His answer was, "My grace is all you need; for my power is strongest when you are weak." I am most happy, then, to be proud of my weaknesses, in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me. ¹⁰I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

5. **So I will boast.** What God allowed Paul to see, gave him great courage! Yet because the false teachers seem to think visions and revelations prove a person to be a true disciple of Christ, Paul speaks about these things as though it were someone else who had experienced them. He will only boast of his weakness!!!

6. **I would be telling the truth.** He can truthfully boast of many such things!!! But his appointment as an apostle is not based on this! Also, such things can be easily faked and are impossible to test. Therefore Paul wants people to evaluate him on the basis of what they see him do and say!!!

7. **But to keep me.** This shows that *verse 2* speaks of Paul himself. **Puffed up.** One who is puffed up by his visions and experiences, tends to de-emphasize God. In contrast to the boasting of the false teachers, Paul says God gave him a painful physical ailment to keep him from being *proud*. What this was, we have no way of knowing. Two things most often suggested are: chronic eye disease; epilepsy. [*Chrysostom* thinks it was not something in his body, but an opponent who followed him around and tried to destroy his work. *Ephraim Syrus* identifies the *painful physical ailment* as Alexander the metalworker (2 *Tim.* 4:14).]

8. **Three times.** Like Jesus (*Mark 14:36*), Paul prays to escape suffering. But he learns that God's refusal is his answer, and he submits to the will of his Lord!

9. **His answer was.** Paul did not receive what he wanted, but really something better!!! The fact that Paul could do so much in spite of his weakness, showed it was the Lord's power working through him!!! *Suffering is no curse!!!*

10. **I am content.** He can be content, because it is all for Christ's sake!!! His weakness, etc., all work out to a more successful ministry!!! Compare *Phil.* 4:13.

Paul's Concern for the Corinthians

¹¹I am acting like a fool—but you have made me do it. You are the ones who ought to show your approval of me. For even if I am nothing, I am in no way inferior to those very special “apostles” of yours. ¹²The things that prove that I am an apostle were done with all patience among you; there were signs and wonders and miracles. ¹³How were you treated any worse than the other churches, except that I did not bother you for help? Please forgive me for being so unfair!

¹⁴This is now the third time that I am ready to come to visit you—and I will not make any demands on you. It is you I want, not your money. After all, children should not have to provide for their parents, but parents should provide for their children. ¹⁵I will be glad to spend all I have, and myself as well, in order to help you. Will you love me less because I love you so much?

¹⁶You will agree, then, that I was not a burden to you. But, someone will say, I was tricky and

Paul's Concern for the Corinthians

I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing. The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance. How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less? Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught

11. **I am acting like a fool.** “I know I am acting like a fool to come down to your level and boast about such things, but you have forced me to do it! You should have taken my part against the false teachers, because I am in no way inferior to those ‘super-apostles’ you seem to be so proud of!”

12. **The things that prove.** “During the time I spent at Corinth when I planted the church there, you saw much evidence that I was an apostle!” Compare *1 Thess. 1:5* and note.

13. **How were you?** In order to discredit Paul, the false teachers have said that the fact he would not take their pay proved he did not really love them, and that he thought they were inferior to the other churches! See notes on *2 Cor. 11:7-12*. But the only *sign* he omitted at Corinth was to take their money. He says in *irony*, “Please forgive me for being so unfair!”

14. **The third time.** The first was *Acts 18:1*; the second was the painful visit mentioned in *2 Cor. 2:1*. He still refuses to take their money, but he did take money from other churches (*2 Cor. 11:7-9* and notes). As their *spiritual father*, he must provide for them!

15. **I will be glad to.** Paul’s whole life is a living sacrifice in imitation of Jesus Christ. Compare *Mark 10:45*. **Will you!** They have completely misunderstood his act of self-sacrifice. He intended this as a sign of his great love, but they misinterpreted it and thought he did not love them, and even said he had done them wrong (*2 Cor. 11:7*). Paul now hopes they will understand his love for them, and will respond with great love for him!

16. **You will agree, then.** Paul asks them to take this as evidence of his love for them! **But, someone will say.** The false teachers said he was tricky enough to drain the treasury in other ways.

trapped you with lies. ¹⁷How? Did I take advantage of you through any of the messengers I sent? ¹⁸I begged Titus to go, and I sent the other Christian brother with him. Would you say that Titus took advantage of you? Do not he and I act from the very same motives and behave in the same way?

¹⁹Perhaps you think that all along we have been trying to defend ourselves before you. No! We speak as Christ would have us speak, in the presence of God, and everything we do, dear friends, is done to help you. ²⁰I am afraid that when I get there I will find you different from what I would like you to be and you will find me different from what you would like me to be. I am afraid that I will find quarreling and jealousy, hot tempers and selfishness, insults and gossip, pride and disorder. ²¹I am afraid that the next time I come my God will humiliate me in your presence, and I shall weep over many who sinned in the past and have not repented of the immoral things they have done, their sexual sins and lustful deeds.

you by trickery! Did I exploit 17
you through any of the men
I sent you? I urged Titus to 18
go to you and I sent our
brother with him. Titus did
not exploit you, did he? Did
we not act in the same spirit
and follow the same course?

Have you been thinking 19
all along that we have been
defending ourselves to you?
We have been speaking in
the sight of God as those in
Christ; and everything we
do, dear friends, is for your
strengthening. For I am 20
afraid that when I come I may
not find you as I want you to
be, and you may not find me
as you want me to be. I fear
that there may be quarrel-
ing, jealousy, outbursts of
anger, factions, slander,
gossip, arrogance and dis-
order. I am afraid that when 21
I come again my God will
humiliate me before you, and I
will be grieved over many
who have sinned earlier and
have not repented of the im-
purity, sexual sin and de-
bauchery in which they have
indulged.

17. **How?** How could he have done anything like this??? None of the messengers Paul sent *made slaves* of the Corinthians as the false teachers had done (2 Cor. 11:20).

18. **I begged Titus to go.** Evidently the attack has all been against Paul, and the Corinthians continued to trust Titus, and also the unnamed brother. **Would you say?** "Certainly you would not accuse Titus of taking advantage of you and draining the treasury!!! **Do not he and I?** Paul points to their good opinion of Titus and reminds them that Titus was only carrying out Paul's orders. They both work together! This, then, makes it impossible to believe that Paul was trying to trick them in some way.

19. **Perhaps you think.** Paul wants to make it plain that he says all this to help the church at Corinth, and not just to clear his own name. He speaks as Christ's servant.

20. **I am afraid.** "This is why I have defended myself. You must be helped! I am afraid that when I come, I will still find you living in the old way of sin!"

21. **My God will humiliate me.** Paul is thinking of that painful second visit (2 Cor. 2:1). **And I shall weep.** It will bring him great sorrow to be forced to punish those who have failed to turn away from their sins and reform!!! **Immoral.** Here it means any kind of unholy living. **Sexual sins.** These were *standard practice* in the Gentile world. It includes *everything outside* the marriage relationship, such as adultery, homosexuality, etc. See note on Matt. 19:9. **Lustful deeds.** *Debauchery* is the technical term. Compare 1 Pet. 4:2-4 and notes.

Final Warnings and Greetings

13 This is now the third time that I am coming to visit you. "Any accusation must be upheld by the evidence of two or three witnesses"—as the scripture says. ²I want to tell you who have sinned in the past, and all the others; I said it before, during my second visit to you, but I will say it again now that I am away: the next time I come nobody will escape punishment. ³You will have all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. When he deals with you he is not weak; instead he shows his power among you. ⁴For even though it was in weakness that he was put to death on the cross, it is by God's power that he lives. In union with him we also are weak; but in our relations with you, we shall live with him by God's power. ⁵Put yourselves to the test and judge yourselves, to find out whether you are living in faith. Surely you know that Christ Jesus is in you?—

Final Warnings

13 This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." I already ² gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding ³ proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For to ⁴ be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you. ⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you

1. **This is now.** See note on 2 Cor. 12:14. **Two or three witnesses.** Deut. 19:15. This is best understood in view of the fact that he mentions this is the third time he comes. Each visit is a *witness*. If they still have not repented when he comes the third time, he must take harsh measures!!! [Johnson thinks he will hold a church-trial, if necessary, and allow two or three witnesses to establish the truth.]

2. **I want to tell you.** Because Paul had not taken harsh measures against those who sinned in the past, they may think he will not do it now. **I said it before.** "I told you that if I had to come again, I would punish the guilty (compare 2 Cor. 1:23 and note). **Nobody will escape.** Paul is a true apostle and has authority to do what he says! Two examples of miraculous punishment are found in Acts 5:1-3; 13:9-11.

3. **All the proof.** The false teachers said Paul had no power from the Spirit! They want some *sign* as proof. **When he deals with you.** Paul does not boast about himself, but says the Lord working through him is not weak!!! As the Lord showed his power through the gifts from the Spirit, he would also show his power in the punishments of those who refused to turn from sin!!!

4. **For even though.** The world sees the *cross* as evidence of weakness. From a human point of view, the whole idea of a crucified Savior is "*offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles*" (1 Cor. 1:23). **It is by God's power.** The resurrection of Christ shows God's power. See 1 Cor. 6:14; Rom. 1:4. **In union with him.** See 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12. Paul followed the Lord by sharing his weakness in baptism, but the result is that he also shares His Power! See 1 Pet. 3:21 and note.

5. **Put yourselves to the test.** "You have tested me! Now put yourselves to the test! Measure yourself by the Good News, and see if you are really following what Christ taught! Does He approve of the sin in your lives???" **That Christ Jesus is in you.** Christ lives in the "people of God" through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:22; Rom. 8:9-11; compare Col. 2:7; Gal. 2:20). **Unless.** The test Paul mentions here is the true test of living in faith, which is: accepting Christ's weakness (verse 4) and being willing to suffer with Him!!! The Corinthians stressed *knowledge*, Paul stresses *action*!

unless you have completely failed. ⁶I trust you will know that we are not failures. ⁷We pray to God that you will do no wrong—not in order to show that we are a success, but that you may do what is right, even though we may seem to be failures. ⁸For we cannot do a thing against the truth, but only for it. ⁹We are glad when we are weak but you are strong. And so we also pray that you will become perfect. ¹⁰That is why I write this while I am away from you; it is so that when I arrive I will not have to deal harshly with you in using the authority that the Lord gave me—authority to build you up, not to tear you down.

¹¹And now, brothers, good-bye! Strive for perfection; listen to my appeals; agree with one another, and live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection. This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

Final Greetings

Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

6. **I trust.** "When you put yourself to the test of faith, you will discover that what we have been telling you is true! The weakness you despise is really proof that Christ is in us!" [*Reprobate* means *one who has failed the test.*]

7. **We pray to God.** "It is important that you do no wrong, and that you may do what is right. If your obedience leaves me without an opportunity to show the Lord's power through me, I will be happy!"

8. **But only for it.** To act against the truth would be to act from worldly motives and selfish goals. "We apostles do not use our supernatural power to oppose the truth, but always to support it!!" The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "It is a *general* principle, which Christian theology has not always sufficiently remembered, that to fight against truth, whether ethical or historical or scientific, is to fight against Him who is *the* Truth, and so is to court defeat. We *can* do nothing, even if we would, against the truth." Compare Gamaliel's statement in *Acts 5:33-39*. Imagine how Paul must have felt at his conversion.

9. **We are glad.** "Even though we will not need to demonstrate supernatural powers and show that we are strong, we will gladly appear weak to you. The important thing is that you be strong!!" **That you will become perfect.** *MacKnight* says the literal meaning of *perfect* here is: "*to set a dislocated joint.*" Paul's thought is: "You have *dislocated* yourselves through sin. Turn from sin and turn to God and put yourself back in place! You must do this!!"

10. **That is why.** This is the reason for Paul's strongly worded letter, and for what he writes in this Second Letter. It would be no pleasure to him to punish them, and in effect *show off* his authority as a true apostle! The whole purpose behind the Lord's gift of authority to him is to build up! Authority = obligation; and that obligation is to build up, not tear down!!!

11. **Good-bye!** This is his benediction and conclusion. **Strive for perfection.** *Perfection* is the same word used in *verse 9*. **Listen.** "Do what I asked you to do." **Agree.** "Live in peace and avoid division!"

¹²Greet one another with a brotherly kiss.
All God's people send you their greetings.

¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Greet one another with a 12
holy kiss. All the saints send
their greetings.

May the grace of the Lord 13
Jesus Christ, and the love of
God, and the fellowship of
the Holy Spirit be with all of
you.

12. A **brotherly kiss**. See note on *Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20*. This was a standard form of greeting. **All God's people**. The Christians in Macedonia (*2 Cor. 7:5-7*). [*Saint*: see note on *1 Cor. 6:11*.]

13. **The grace**. This is Paul's most complete benediction. **Grace** is the undeserved salvation which comes through Christ-on-the-cross. **Love** is what God showed in acting through Christ while we were still enemies. **Fellowship** is the joint sharing of the church in the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor. 12:13*).

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

In *John 5:39*, Jesus told his Jewish listeners: "*You study the Scriptures because you think that in them you will find eternal life. And they themselves speak about me!*" The Scriptures in this case were the Old Testament Scriptures. One of the *gifts from the Spirit* (which every apostle had) was an *inspired understanding* of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Greek Septuagint Translation of the Old Testament was widely read and studied, even by Gentiles. The writers of the New Testament draw most of their Old Testament quotations from this version. Because the Septuagint was so widely used, it was *ready made* to use in proving the fact that Jesus is the Son of God!!! Compare Paul's use of it in *Acts 17:1-4*.

The *circumcision party* was a continual source of trouble in the early church! They taught that in addition to being united to Christ in baptism, no one could be a true Christian unless he had been circumcised and naturalized as a part of the Jewish Nation, and that he kept the Jewish dietary laws and customs. In the Roman Province of Galatia, some of the Gentile Christians began to doubt what they had been taught by Paul. Under constant pressure from the *circumcision party*, they accepted circumcision (after having already been baptized into Christ) and all the Jewish conditions of membership. Two major questions are raised by this *circumcision party*: Is Paul a true apostle??? Does Paul preach the true gospel??? Their answer to both was NO! There is also some reason to think that they preached a "crossless Christ" in opposition to Paul's "Christ-on-the-cross."

Paul, then, writes to expose the distortion these false teachers have done to the Good News, and to show that the *works of The Law* have nothing

at all to do with being put right with God!!! Some have called this Letter: *The Gospel according to Paul*. But this misses the point!!! BOTH Paul and James preach the SAME GOSPEL!!! Paul stresses *faith*, and James stresses *action*, but both are saying *in effect* the same thing!!! What The Law cannot do, God did!!! He acted in Christ to set us free!!! Jesus is the only source of salvation!!!

No one can know for sure just when or where Paul wrote this Letter. Dates have been suggested from 49 A.D. to 63 A.D.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

1 From Paul, whose call to be an apostle did not come from man or by means of man, but from Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from death. ²All the brothers who are here join me in sending greetings to the churches of Galatia:

³May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

⁴In order to set us free from this present evil age, Christ gave himself for our sins, in obedience to the will of our God and Father. ⁵To God be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

The One Gospel

⁶I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— and all the brothers with me, 2

To the churches in Galatia:

Grace and peace to you 3
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who 4
gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

I am astonished that you 6
are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

1. **From Paul.** When we know the attempt to discredit Paul that had taken place in Galatia, these opening words seem *stark!* **Whose call to be an apostle.** Paul emphasizes, that like the Twelve, his appointment as an apostle came directly from the Lord! [If Paul makes thirteen apostles, remember there were thirteen Tribes, since Levi was not counted.] The false teachers must have said that Paul's appointment came through the church at Antioch (*from man*) and that he received the Holy Spirit through Ananias (*by means of a man*). **Who raised him from death.** "After his resurrection God sent Jesus Christ from heaven to make me an apostle!"

2. **All the brothers.** "These brothers, by joining with me in this letter, affirm the truth of what I am writing." **To the churches of Galatia.** This letter goes to an area, rather than a single congregation.

3. **May God.** Paul's greeting is sincere, even though he has some harsh things to say to them later.

4. **In order to.** At the time of Christ, Jews spoke of two *ages* of time: the *present evil age* meant the time they were then living in; the *New Age* they viewed as a time when sin and death would no longer rule, and they expected it to come with the (first) Advent of the Messiah. Paul writes to tell them Christ has set us free from this present evil age. That means that the *New Age* is here!!! Compare *Rom. 8:1-4; Matt. 19:28* and notes. **In obedience.** God himself **ACTED** in Christ-on-the-cross!!! That is, God sent his Son, and his Son obeyed by dying to set us free!!!

5. **To God!** Paul is *affirming* the glory of God, and his "Amen" rings with faith!!!

6. **I am surprised at you!** Both the TEV and NIV bring out the *shocked amazement* of Paul. The strength of his feeling is shown by his choice of words in *verses 8 & 9*. **You are deserting the one.** These seem to say they are deserting Paul, but since he always seems to say it is God who calls you by the grace of Christ, this must be the meaning here. Compare *John 6:44-45*. Paul is saying: "By deserting the gospel I preached to you, you are really deserting the God who called you by the grace of Christ!!!"

Christ, and are going to another gospel. ⁷Actually, there is no "other gospel," but I say it because there are some people who are upsetting you and trying to change the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be condemned to hell! ⁹We have said it before, and now I say it again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell!

¹⁰Does this sound as if I am trying to win men's approval? No! I want God's approval! Am I trying to be popular with men? If I were still trying to do so, I would not be a servant of Christ.

How Paul Became an Apostle

¹¹Let me tell you, my brothers, that the gospel I preach was not made by man. ¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor did anyone teach it to me. Instead, it was Jesus Christ himself who revealed it to me.

which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

I want you to know, my brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

7. **Actually, there is no.** "There is no other message from God! I say it this way because some are claiming that God told them to turn you to the Law of Moses."

8. **But even.** "They tell you that Peter, and even I myself, preach that you can be put right with God through the Law. But even if we ourselves, or an angel from heaven (if such a thing were possible), would dare to preach a different gospel, may he be condemned to hell!" The TEV correctly brings out the emphatic *curse* inherent in ANATHEMA! This is not profanity, but a solemn curse from God himself! The "eternally condemned" of the NIV is also correct, but doesn't sound as emphatic. ANATHEMA = condemned to hell = eternally condemned. Paul wants to make this as strong as possible to shock them into awareness of the horrible sin the *circumciston party* is doing!!! Compare Peter's language in *Acts 8:20*.

9. **We have said it before.** He points back to warnings which Silas and Timothy, as well as he himself, have given about this in the past. **Now I.** Here he repeats what he said in *verse 8*. Some say Paul is not using the spirit of *1 Cor. ch 13* here. But this is a crisis situation! What Paul shows is a *holy jealousy* for the honor of God and the message of Christ-on-the-cross!!!

10. **Does this sound?** "I have been accused of saying whatever anyone wants to hear. Does this sound like it??? God will be my judge! If I were trying to be popular with men, I would never have become the servant of Christ!!!" [Some think *still trying* implies that as a Pharisee, he had tried to be popular with men.]

11. **Let me tell you.** "The *circumciston party* says I preach a second-hand gospel, which I have distorted. Let me tell you this is not true!!! My gospel has no human origin!!!"

12. **I did not.** "There is nothing second-hand about my gospel!!" **It was Jesus Christ himself.** Paul is probably thinking of *Acts 26:14-18*.

¹³You have been told of the way I used to live when I was devoted to the Jewish religion, how I persecuted without mercy the church of God and did my best to destroy it. ¹⁴I was ahead of most fellow Jews of my age in my practice of the Jewish religion. I was much more devoted to the traditions of our ancestors.

¹⁵But God, in his grace, chose me even before I was born, and called me to serve him. And when he decided ¹⁶to reveal his Son to me, so that I might preach the Good News about him to the Gentiles, I did not go to anyone for advice, ¹⁷nor did I go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me. Instead, I went at once to Arabia, and then I returned to Damascus. ¹⁸It was three years later that I went to Jerusalem to get information from Peter, and I stayed with him for

For you have heard of my ¹³ previous way of life in Judaism, how I violently persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond ¹⁴ many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who ¹⁵ set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man. I ¹⁷ did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Then after three years, I ¹⁸ went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.

13. **You have been told.** "You know all about my old life. I told you about it myself." Paul would have to defend himself to the Jews everywhere he went. Everyone would want to know why Paul the Destroyer suddenly became Paul the servant of Christ. Nothing in his background and past would imply selfish motives for his converting to Christ!!! Perhaps it was for this very reason that the Lord allowed Paul to experience such weakness (see *2 Cor. 11:23-28*), to prove to the world that he was not acting from selfish motives.

14. **I was ahead.** Paul had been an unusually brilliant and eager student of The Law, and probably had been a *missionary for Judaism*. Compare *Acts 22:3-5*. **Traditions.** Those unique beliefs which made him a Pharisee.

15. **Chose me.** Compare *Rom. 8:29-30* and notes. Paul is thinking of his unique background and training. By his birth he became at the same time, a Hebrew, a Greek, and a Roman citizen. He was educated in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek Septuagint, and in all the Greek learning and literature. He was shaped by an intense, but mistaken, spiritual discipline. All of this prepared him for the day he would learn the truth and become a follower of Christ. He had all the qualities needed to be *the* apostle to the Gentiles.

16. **To reveal his Son.** To qualify as an apostle, Paul had to *actually see* Jesus (compare *1 Cor. 15:8-10*). As an apostle, Paul stands **DISCRETE**, and does not depend on *any man* for his authority and appointment.

17. **Nor did I go to Jerusalem.** "Those who were apostles before I was appointed did not teach me the gospel of Christ." Since the Twelve stayed on in Jerusalem (*Acts 8:1*), that city was the center of: *Christianity; Judaism; the circumcision party*. **Instead.** MacKnight has Paul say: "But I went away into Arabia, where there was no apostle; and having there received further revelations from Christ, and studied the (Old Testament) Scriptures by the light of these revelations, I again returned to Damascus without having seen any of the (Twelve) apostles." As an apostle, Paul had been *baptized with the Holy Spirit* in the same way that each apostle had been. The Spirit taught the apostles directly (*John 14:26*). Therefore Paul did not receive his gospel *second-handedly*.

18. **Three years later.** "Not until three years after my being made new in Christ did I go to Jerusalem to compare notes with Peter." This may imply that Paul stayed in Arabia for three years, coming back just before the trouble mentioned in *Acts 9:23* and note. **Two weeks** = fifteen days as Jews count.

two weeks. ¹⁹I did not see any other apostle except James, the Lord's brother.

²⁰What I write is true, I am not lying, so help me God!

²¹Afterward I went to places in Syria and Cilicia. ²²At that time the members of the Christian churches in Judea did not know me personally. ²³They knew only what others said, "The man who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy!" ²⁴And so they praised God because of me.

Paul and the Other Apostles

2 Fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem with Barnabas; I also took Titus along with me. ²I went because God revealed to me that I should go. In a private meeting with the leaders,

I saw none of the other apostles, only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you ²⁰ before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I ²¹ went to Syria and Cilicia. I ²² was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only ²³ heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And ²⁴ they praised God because of me.

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

2 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who ²

19. **Any other apostle.** It seems that James, the Lord's brother, was an apostle, but not one of the Twelve. However, scholars are divided on this. James was an important person in the Jerusalem church (*Acts 15:13; 21:18*). It may be Paul affirms he only saw these *two*, because Jews believed *ten* men were necessary to form a quorum, and he wants to prove that *they* did not appoint him an apostle.

20. **What I write is true.** Paul affirms that he is *in fact* a divinely appointed apostle of Christ, and calls God to be his witness that he speaks the truth!!!

21. **Afterward.** See *Acts 9:26-30* and notes.

22. **The Christian churches.** In *standard English*, both *Christian church* and *church of Christ* mean the church which Jesus built (*Matt. 16:18* and notes). Paul means he was personally unknown to the messianic community in Judea.

23. **They knew only.** Although they did not know Paul personally, they had certainly heard of him and what he had tried to do in the past (*Acts 9:1-2*). Try to imagine how they must have felt when they heard Paul the Destroyer was now preaching Christ!!!

24. **And so they praised God.** This shows they accepted Paul's conversion to Christ as genuine!!! This contrasts with the attitude of the *circumcision party*!

1. **Fourteen years later.** Probably fourteen years after the visit mentioned in *Gal. 1:18*. [Johnson thinks it should be measured from Paul's conversion to Christ.] This certainly is the Jerusalem Meeting of *Acts ch 15*, and Ramsay gives the date as 49 A.D. The church began in Jerusalem on Pentecost, 30 A.D. (by the corrected calendar), and Paul's conversion must have been between 31 and 33 A.D. The visit of *Gal. 1:18* is probably the same as *Acts 9:26*. Paul made a second visit (*Acts 11:30*) which is not mentioned here. **Barnabas.** *Acts 4:36*. **Titus.** Paul seems to have taken Titus as a *test case*. Many of the Gentile Christians had already been "Gentiles converted to Judaism" before they heard of Christ. Titus was a direct convert from idolatry to Christ. Compare *1 Thess. 1:9*.

2. **Because God.** "The Twelve did not call me to Jerusalem! I want you to know that God himself sent me!" **In a private meeting.** "Not wanting to cause trouble, I talked this matter over privately with

I explained to them the gospel message that I preach to the Gentiles. I did not want my work in the past or in the present to go for nothing. ³My companion Titus, even though he is Greek, was not forced to be circumcised, 'although some men, who had pretended to be brothers and joined the group, wanted to circumcise him. These people had slipped in as spies, to find out about the freedom we have through our union with Christ Jesus. They wanted to make slaves of us. ⁵We did not give in to them for a minute, in order to keep the truth of the gospel safe for you.

⁶But those who seemed to be the leaders—I say this because it makes no difference to me what they were; God does not judge by outward appearances—those leaders, I say, made no new suggestions to me. ⁷On the contrary, they saw that God had given me the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter

seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been given the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been given the task of preaching the gospel to the

Peter, James, and John. I had no doubts about the truth of the gospel I had been preaching, but if the other apostles did not stand with me on this, I was afraid all my work as an apostle would go for nothing!"

3. **Was not forced to be circumcised.** The *circumcision party* would expect Peter, James, and John (the "apostles of circumcision") to take their side in the argument. Paul was opposing centuries of anti-Gentile hostility. The future of the whole Christian church hung in the balance!!! Titus was the *test case*, and if Peter, James, and John had insisted that Titus must be circumcised (after he had been already buried with Christ in baptism), the history of Christianity would have been drastically changed!!!

4. **Although some men.** The NIV adds "This matter arose" to show the source of the problem is the false brothers mentioned. These are certainly the ones mentioned in *Acts 15:1*. Paul's choice of words imply that these are a particular group (probably Pharisees) who have *infiltrated* the churches with the idea of seizing control of them. **The freedom we have.** Christians have been set free from slavery which The Law brings. These false brothers wanted to make slaves of every Gentile Christian by persuading them to obey The Law of Moses. *Chapter 5* examines this.

5. **In order to keep the truth.** Paul's motive was to preserve the *truth!* If he had given in and allowed Titus to be circumcised, that would have compromised the truth. [In the case of Timothy (*Acts 16:3*), he could do it without compromising the truth.]

6. **Who seemed to be the leaders.** Peter, James, and John. **What they were.** "The fact that they were with Christ in his earthly ministry, does not make me any less an apostle, because God doesn't *play favorites* on the basis of such things!" **Made no new suggestions.** This was their chance to "set Paul straight," if there were some mistakes in what he had been preaching.

7. **On the contrary.** "Not only did they not make any new suggestions, they did accept me as being an apostle equal with themselves!!! They saw that God had sent me to the Gentiles, just as He sent Peter to the Jews!!!"

the task of preaching the gospel to the Jews. ⁸For by God's power I was made an apostle to the Gentiles, just as Peter was made an apostle to the Jews. ⁹James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be the leaders, recognized that God had given me this special task; so they shook hands with Barnabas and me. As partners we all agreed that we would work among the Gentiles and they among the Jews. ¹⁰All they asked was that we should remember the needy in their group, the very thing I have worked hard to do.

Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Paul Rebukes Peter at Antioch

¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him in public, because he was clearly wrong. ¹²Before some men who had been sent by James arrived there, Peter had been eating with the Gentile brothers. But after these men arrived, he drew back and would not eat with them, because he was afraid of those who were in favor of circum-

Paul Opposes Peter

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the

8. **For by God's power.** "The same God made both Peter and myself apostles!!!"

9. **Recognized that God.** "These outstanding leaders in the church, James, Peter, and John, recognized that God had appointed me to this work, and had given me the same supernatural powers that they all had!!!" **Shook hands.** "They shook hands with Barnabas and me as a sign of our fellowship as servants of Christ!" **As partners.** "As partners together in the service of Christ, it was unanimous that Barnabas and I would work among the Gentiles and they would continue to work among the Jews in Judea." This last is implied in *Acts 8:1*.

10. **Remember the needy.** The NIV adds *continue* to show it was something that was already going on and must be kept up. The TEV adds *in their group* to show that this is concerned with one special group of poor, the Christians in Judea. The hostility of the Jewish leaders certainly made employment impossible for many of the Christians there, and there were also repeated famines. A third factor was the unrest which climaxed in the Jewish wars and brought on the destruction of Jerusalem. We see God's hand in this, as more than once, the Gentile Christians send money and help to the Christian poor in Judea, cementing the bond of fellowship between the Judeans and the Gentiles.

11. **I opposed him in public.** "I want to show you that I am equal in authority to all the other apostles and that I have the right to oppose one of the 'apostles of circumcision' when they are wrong!!!" This was not a sharp confrontation, but a scolding *in public*. But it was serious in that what Peter was doing would have far reaching consequences!!!

12. **Before some men.** Peter had a vision (*Acts 10:9-16*), and he witnessed the Spirit come on Gentiles (*Acts 10:44-47*). This taught him that God had removed the barrier between Jew and Gentile. Knowing this, he ate with the Gentile Christians and thought nothing about it! **But after these men arrived.** Note that James sent them. This implies that James, the Lord's brother, was at this time the head of the *circumcision party*, yet we know that he was willing to take God's side at the Jerusalem Meeting (*Acts 15:13-19*). In eating with the Gentiles, Peter would be violating the customs and Kosher code of the Jewish dietary laws. Knowing this would cause a hostile reaction from the Judean Jews, Peter took the easy way out!

cising the Gentiles. ¹³The other Jewish brothers started acting like cowards, along with Peter; and even Barnabas was swept along by their cowardly action. ¹⁴When I saw that they were not walking a straight path in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter, in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you have been living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How, then, can you try to force Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Jews and Gentiles Are Saved by Faith

¹⁵Indeed, we are Jews by birth, and not Gentile sinners. ¹⁶Yet we know that a man is put right with God only through faith in Jesus Christ, never by doing what the Law requires. We, too, have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be put right with God through our faith in Christ, and not by doing what the Law requires. For no man is put right with God by doing what the Law requires. ¹⁷If, then, as we try to be put right with God by our union with Christ, it is found that we are sinners as much as the Gentiles are—does this mean that Christ has served the interests

circumcision group. The ¹³ other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

When I saw that they were ¹⁴ not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

"We who are Jews by ¹⁵ birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not ¹⁶ justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

"If, while we seek to be ¹⁷ justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes

13. **The other Jewish brothers . . . even Barnabas.** See how Peter's action set off a chain-reaction!!!

14. **When I saw.** Paul could see clearly the consequences of this action. Peter was being a hypocrite when he taught that all are one in Christ, and then acted as though the uncircumcised Gentiles were *unclean*. This was not an act of panic, but by taking the *easy way out* to avoid trouble, Peter was putting severe pressure on the Gentiles to live like the Judeans did. This is the very thing that was settled at the Jerusalem Meeting!!!

15. **We are Jews by birth.** As Paul continues his public scolding of Peter, he adopts the language of the Judeans, and speaks of *Gentile sinners*.

16. **Yet we know.** "We know by the Old Testament Scriptures, as well as by the Spirit God gave us, that it is not obedience to the Law of Moses, but FAITH in Jesus Christ that puts us right with God!!!" **We, too.** "Peter, you and I who are Jews by birth, had to believe in Christ to be put right with God! The Law of Moses was no help!" On the nature of *faith*, see note on *James 2:19*. **For no man.** "When we Jews convert to Christ, we are declaring that we cannot be saved by The Law!"

17. **If, then.** "But if we, in our effort to reach out through faith to seize Christ and be put right with God, must then *let go* of The Law and put ourselves in the same group with Gentile sinners, does Christ then serve sin??? By no means!!" The next verse explains.

of sin? By no means! ¹⁸If I start to build up again what I have torn down, it proves that I am breaking the Law. ¹⁹So far as the Law is concerned, however, I am dead—killed by the Law itself—in order that I might live for God. I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, ²⁰so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me. ²¹I do not reject the grace of God. If a man is put right with God through the Law, it means that Christ died for nothing!

sin? Absolutely not! If I re-¹⁸ build what I destroyed, I prove that I am a law-breaker. For through the 19 law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have²⁰ been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by, faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the 21 grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Faith or Observance of the Law

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you

Law or Faith

3 You foolish Galatians! Who put a spell on you? Right before your eyes you had a plain description of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross! ²Tell me just this one thing: did you receive God's Spirit by doing what the Law requires, or

18. **If I start.** "You, by again making The Law an obligation, are proving that what you were doing while you lived as the Gentiles do, was in fact a violation of The Law. That is, during the time you neglected it and did not follow its rules." This is in effect what Paul is saying to Peter.

19. **However, I am dead.** "I and all the other believers DIED with Christ, killed by The Law itself, since its CURSE killed Christ. Now that the Law considers me dead, I am free to live for God!" Compare *Rom. ch 7. I have been.* "The way I died to the Law, was to share or be united to Christ's death on the cross!" Compare *Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:17.*

20. **But it is Christ.** Under The Law, it was Paul the proud Pharisee who lived. But the old man died with Christ, and now it is Paul the Christian who lives. Or rather, it is Christ who lives in Paul! **I live by faith.** Faith links Paul to Christ!!! Christ is the *vine*, believers are the *branches*! Compare *John 15:1-11.*

21. **I do not reject.** "I do not reject God's grace, but you and the *circumcision party* are doing it when you try to be put right with God through The Law. If The Law puts a man right with God, then Christ need not have died at all!" Motive is all important in Christianity. Paul himself could participate in Jewish rites (*Acts 21:26*) with a clear conscience because he *KNEW* that these had nothing at all to do with his salvation. But for those who *really believed* The Law could save them, the ritual of The Law would condemn them eternally! See *Gal. 5:3-4.*

1. **You foolish Galatians!** "The message that God puts men right with himself through faith is so full of comfort and the proof of it is so plain, that I must ask you foolish Galatians, 'Who put a spell on you???' " [See *Rom. 5:1-2; James 2:19* and notes.] **Right before your eyes!** Paul uses the strongest possible language to bring past facts to life!!! *Christ-on-the-cross* is "what no man ever thought could happen!" Compare *1 Cor. 1:23; Heb. 9:15* and notes.

2. **Tell me.** "Since you think The Law is superior to the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free, let me ask you this question. You have God's Spirit living in you (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*). Tell me: Did you receive God's Spirit through The Law, or through faith??? When I also gave you the *gifts from the Spirit* (compare *Acts 19:6*), few of you knew anything about the Law of Moses."

by hearing and believing the gospel? ³How can you be so foolish! You began by God's Spirit; do you now want to finish by your own power? ⁴Did all your experience mean nothing at all? Surely it meant something! ⁵Does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you because you do what the Law requires, or because you hear and believe the gospel?

⁶It is just as the scripture says about Abraham, "He believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." ⁷You should realize, then, that the people who have faith are the real descendants of Abraham. ⁸The scripture saw ahead of time that God would put the Gentiles right with himself through faith. And so the scripture preached the Good News to Abraham ahead of time: "Through you God will bless all the people on earth." ⁹Abraham believed and was blessed; so all who believe are blessed as he was.

heard? Are you so foolish? ³ After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain perfection by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? Does ⁴ God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? ⁵

Consider Abraham: "He ⁶ believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are ⁷ children of Abraham. The ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be ⁹ blessed in you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

3. **How can you be so foolish!** They had begun with a new birth of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*) and had been following the spiritual religion of Jesus Christ. To go under The Law means trying to save themselves by their own efforts, which is impossible! When they try to put themselves right with God through The Law, they do two things: (1) They say by their actions that there was no need or purpose for Christ to die; (2) They must deny the Holy Spirit (*see Heb. 10:29 and note*).

4. **Your experience?** The Galatian Christians had suffered much in the persecution which hostile Jews brought against them. Compare *1 Thess. 2:14-16*. If they abandon the gospel, all this effort will go for nothing!!!

5. **Does God give you?** "Christians have advantages that those under The Law never did have! You Galatians have the Spirit (*John 7:37-39*), and you have seen the miracles the Holy Spirit did among you. Was this because you obeyed the ritual of The Law, or was it because you heard and believed the gospel???"

6. **About Abraham.** *Gen. 15:6*. "The Scriptures (Old Testament) prove that God intended both Jews and Gentiles to be put right with him through faith, and not through The Law." **And because of his faith.** This quotation shows Abraham, whom every Jew thought of as sort of a "guardian angel" (*see Matt. 3:9 and note*), being accepted as righteous by God **BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH!** Abraham had a positive faith (*see James 2:22 and note*).

7. **Are the real descendants.** "You are no relation to Abraham, unless you have the same kind of faith which he had!!" Those who reach out through faith to seize Christ are the ones who are Abraham's descendants!!! *See verses 26-29*.

8. **Saw ahead of time.** "Since God had already decided to put men right with himself by faith, the scripture tells about it." **The Good News.** The promise that through Abraham, God would bless all the people on earth, (and not just the Jews). The quotation is found in *Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18*.

9. **So all who believe.** We see Abraham had an active faith, not passive, and God blessed him because of his faith! Therefore, all who believe with the active faith that Abraham had, are blessed as he was! [On the nature of faith, see note on *James 2:19*.]

¹⁰Those who depend on obeying the Law live under a curse. For the scripture says, "Whoever does not always obey everything that is written in the book of the Law is under God's curse!"

¹¹Now, it is clear that no man is put right with God by means of the Law; because the scripture says, "He who is put right with God through faith shall live." ¹²But the Law does not depend on faith. Instead, as the scripture says, "The man who does everything the Law requires will live by it."

¹³But Christ has redeemed us from the curse that the Law brings, by becoming a curse for us; because the scripture says, "Anyone who is hanged on a tree is under God's curse." ¹⁴Christ did this in order that the blessing God promised Abraham might be given to the Gentiles by means of Christ Jesus, so that we, through faith, might receive the Spirit promised by God.

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

10. **On obeying the Law.** "If you depend on the rites of The Law to save you, you are putting yourself under a curse! For The Law brings God's curse on all who do not keep it perfectly! And, if you break only one command, you are guilty of breaking them all (*James 2:10*)!!!" The quotation is *Deut. 27:26*.

11. **By means of the Law.** "Besides, The Law itself proves that no one is put right with God by means of The Law." The quotation is *Habakkuk 2:4*. *Alford* (Greek Testament) also translates this: "*The just by faith shall live.*" *Alford* says: "He is not seeking to show by what the righteous shall live, but the ground itself of that righteousness which shall issue in life; and the contrast is between *HO DIKAIOS EK PISTEOS* and *O POIESAS AUTA*." Compare *Rom. 5:1*. But faith is more than just believing (*James 2:19*). Faith reaches out!!

12. **Does not depend on faith.** *Johnson* says: "It is not a system of faith, but proclaims life by doing the Law, rather than by faith. But since none can keep it perfectly, all are under the curse (*verse 10*)." The quotation is *Lev. 18:5*.

13. **But Christ has redeemed us.** "The Law held us under its curse, but Christ bought us from the curse by becoming a curse for us. It was impossible for us to free ourselves from the curse, but what we find impossible, God did through Christ (*Rom. 8:1-4*)!" The quotation is *Deut. 21:23*. Compare *Matt. 20:28*; *1 Tim. 2:6*; *1 Cor. 6:20*; *7:23*; *Titus 2:14*.

14. **In order that.** "Christ-on-the-cross gives to the Gentiles (and Jews) the blessing God promised to Abraham (*verse 9*)!" It is correct to say that: through Christ, God made His promises to Israel (and the Gentiles) come true; and: Christ was the one who fulfilled Israel's contract to God (through the Law). Compare *Rom. 8:3-4*; *Acts 13:32-33*; *Heb. 9:15* and notes. **Might receive the Spirit.** The presence of the Holy Spirit is one large difference between The Law and the Good News!!! Compare *John 7:37-39*; *Acts 5:32*; *1 Cor. 6:19-20*. See notes on *verses 2 & 5*.

The Law and the Promise

¹⁵Brothers, I am going to use an everyday example: when two men agree on a matter and sign a covenant, no one can break that covenant or add anything to it. ¹⁶Now, God made his promises to Abraham and to his descendant. The scripture does not say, "and to your descendants," meaning many people. It says, "and to your descendant, meaning one person only, who is Christ. ¹⁷What I mean is this: God made a covenant and promised to keep it. The Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, cannot break that covenant and cancel God's promise. ¹⁸For if what God gives depends on the Law, then it no longer depends on his promise. However, it was because God had promised it that he gave it to Abraham.

¹⁹What was the purpose of the Law, then? It was added in order to show what wrongdoing is, and was meant to last until the coming of Abraham's descendant, to whom the promise was made. The Law was handed down by angels, with

The Law and the Promise

Brothers; let me take an 15
example from everyday life,
Just as no one can set aside
or add to a human covenant
that has been duly estab-
lished, so it is in this case.
The promises were spoken 16
to Abraham and to his seed.
The Scripture does not say
"and to seeds," meaning
many people, but "and to
your seed," meaning one
person, who is Christ. What 17
I mean is this: The law, in-
troduced 430 years later,
does not set aside the cove-
nant previously established
by God and thus do away
with the promise. For if 18
the inheritance depends on
the law, then it no longer
depends on a promise;
but God in his grace gave
it to Abraham through a
promise.

What, then, was the pur- 19
pose of the law? It was added
because of transgressions
until the Seed to whom the
promise referred had come.
The law was put into effect
through angels by a media-

15. **An everyday example.** "To disprove the claims of those who are saying that God's promise to bless the Gentiles through Abraham and his descendant, is to come true through converting them to Judaism, I show you this example."

16. **Now, God made.** "God promised to bless all the people of the world through Abraham and his descendant. God specifically said *DESCENDANT* to point to Christ." Jewish thought understood *descendant* (seed) to mean *one chosen family* (Israel). Paul points this directly to Christ, who is in a far higher sense than Abraham, the *FATHER* of the *one chosen family*.

17. **What I mean is this.** "I want to show you that God made a covenant and promised to keep it. Since this was with Abraham and his *descendant*, it did not terminate with the death of Abraham. Not until four hundred and thirty years later did The Law come, and it came without the consent of either Abraham or his descendant Christ, but only with the consent of the Jewish Nation. The Law, then, cannot possibly break that covenant which God made and cancel God's promise, by introducing a new and different method of blessing the people of the earth."

18. **For if.** "If you earn it, it is not a free gift! If it is through The Law, it cannot be through God's promise!" **However.** Abraham proves the point! See *verse 9*.

19. **What was?** "Why did God give The Law??? To restrain sin by clearly showing what wrongdoing is!!! But it was temporary and was meant to last only until Abraham's *descendant* came." **By angels.** See *Heb. 2:2; Acts 7:38, 53. A go-between.* Note that The Law came through both angels and a go-between. But God made his promise directly to Abraham. This shows that The Law was inferior to the *promise*. [The Good News was spoken directly through God's Son!!! *Heb. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:5-6.*]

a man acting as a go-between. ²⁰But a go-between is not needed when there is only one person; and God is one.

The Purpose of the Law

²¹Does this mean that the Law is against God's promises? No, not at all! For if a law had been given that could bring life to men, then man could be put right with God through law. ²²But the scripture has said that the whole world is under the power of sin, so that the gift which is promised on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³Before the time for faith came, however, the Law kept us all locked up as prisoners, until this coming faith should be revealed. ²⁴So the Law was in charge of us until Christ came, so that we might be put right with God through faith. ²⁵Now that the time of faith is here, the Law is no longer in charge of us.

²⁶It is through faith that all of you are God's

tor. A mediator, however, ²⁰ does not represent just one party; but God is one.

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But ²² the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Before this faith came, we ²³ were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now ²⁵ that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Sons of God

You are all sons of God ²⁶ through faith in Christ Jesus,

20. **Is not needed.** "When God makes a promise, no go-between is needed!" See the contrast in *Heb. 12:18-24*.

21. **Does this mean:** "The Law is not in competition with God's promise, because The Law does not give life at all! If it could give life, then The Law could be said to be *against* God's promise. The Law, by placing men under its curse and taking away their hope of mercy, forces them to reach out to seize God's promise through faith!!!" See notes on *Rom. 3:31*.

22. **But the scripture.** "The scripture shows that all the people of earth, both Jew and Gentile, are held as slaves by sin and are under God's curse. The only way out of this curse, is through the promised gift which comes THROUGH faith in Christ!!! We reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make ourselves part of it (verse 27)."

23. **Before.** "Before the Good News of God's act in Christ was revealed (*1 Cor. 2:7-10*), The Law kept us locked up as prisoners, criminals condemned by The Law, to be set free only when this faith should be revealed!" Compare *Heb. 9:15* and note.

24. **Was in charge.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says of the PAIDAGOGOS: "For he was a confidential dependent, usually a slave, neither qualified to instruct, nor invested with authority to control his young master, but appointed to attend on him, to safeguard him, and to report to his father any disorderly or immoral habits on which it might be necessary for the father to place a check." This is what The Law did. See notes on *Rom. 3:31*.

25. **Now.** "There is no longer any NEED for The Law to be in charge of us!!!"

26. **It is through faith.** "The Law had no authority or ability to make us God's sons! It is through faith that both Jews and Gentiles are adopted as God's sons (*Rom. 8:15*)!" [In the Bible, the masculine usually (but not always) includes the feminine. Sons includes daughters.]

sons in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁷You were baptized into union with Christ, and so have taken upon yourselves the qualities of Christ himself. ²⁸So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham, and will receive what God has promised.

4 But to continue: the son who will receive his father's property is treated just like a slave while he is young, even though he really owns everything. ²While he is young, there are men who take care of him and manage his affairs until the time set by his father. ³In the same way, we too were slaves of the ruling spirits of the uni-

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JEWISH RITES

for all of you who were united with Christ in baptism have been clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

4 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were enslaved by the basic princi-

27. Baptized into union. Faith = trust = action. Note salvation is *seized*, not achieved! Baptism is a *promise made to God* (1 Pet. 3:21 and note). **The qualities of Christ himself.** "By being baptized into union with Christ and taking upon yourselves the qualities of Christ himself, you become more truly the sons of Abraham and of God than anyone who has only a fleshly claim to be a descendant!!!"

28. So there is no difference. "The Law made a difference between persons. All that has been canceled and terminated!!! Under the Good News, no Jew is superior to a Gentile, no slave is inferior to a free man, no man is superior to a woman!!! You are all one, *in salvation, in promises, in dignity, and in privileges, IN UNION with Christ Jesus.*" See Eph. 2:15.

29. If you belong to Christ. "Since Christ is *the descendant of Abraham*, in your union with Christ, you become what He is, and will receive God's promise, as a spiritual descendant of Abraham." [In the Bible, *faith* means: (1) *belief/trust* - active, obediential; (2) the *obedience* which faith produces; (3) the *teaching* contained in the Good News. Remembering this will help to identify the meaning in a particular context.]

1. The son. Since God intended all along to put men right with himself through faith in Christ, two questions arise: (1) Why didn't Christ come immediately when our first parents sinned? (2) Why did God leave mankind for so many ages under the control of the law of nature and the Law of Moses, when neither of them could give any hope of forgiveness or eternal life? Paul answers these questions with the example of a "young son."

2. While he is young. "An orphan son, before he reaches the age of legal maturity, is treated just like a slave, and there are men who take care of him (guardians) and who manage his affairs (trustees), even though he really owns everything." **Until the time.** "Not until the time his father set, does he have actual possession of all that is his."

3. We too were slaves. "Before the First Coming of Christ, the ruling spirits of the universe formed a valuable discipline for the education of the world, although they held us as slaves." Compare verse 9; Col. 2:8, 20. Those same ruling spirits are condemned when their traditional hold on human society becomes opposition to the higher teaching of Christ!

verse, before we reached spiritual maturity. ⁴But when the right time finally came, God sent his own Son. He came as the son of a human mother, and lived under the Jewish Law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's sons.

⁶To show that you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries, "Father, my Father." ⁷So then, you are no longer a slave, but a son. And since you are his son, God will give you all he has for his sons.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

⁸In the past you did not know God, and so you were slaves of beings who are not gods. ⁹But now that you know God—or, I should say, now that God knows you—how is it that you want to turn back to those weak and pitiful ruling spirits? Why do you want to become their slaves all over

ples of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over

4. **The right time.** "When the time of preparation was completed, at the *right time*, God sent his own Son! He sent him from heaven into our own world!"

5. **To redeem.** "Since both Jews and Gentiles were held slaves by the ruling spirits of the universe, God sent his own Son as a human being to **BUY FREEDOM** for us, so that we might become God's sons and receive every blessing God has for his people!!!"

6. **To show.** "You believing Jews and Gentiles are sons, and to show this God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts so that we can come to him in complete confidence, each calling him *Father* in our own language!" Compare notes on *Acts 2:6; 26:14*. In Christ, God becomes our Father in a sense which only a son (or daughter) can experience!!!

7. **No longer a slave.** [Both the TEV and the NIV follow the corrected Greek text.] "You who have the Holy Spirit as a pledge or guarantee, are no longer a slave under The Law and driven to obey through fear of punishment. You are a son, who is motivated by love (*1 John 4:18*). Since you are a son, you are heir to the treasures of heaven!!!"

8. **In the past.** "Don't be foolish enough to give up your favored status as God's sons!!! Remember what you used to be when you did not know God! Remember when you were slaves to idols and the spirits of dead men who only existed in your imagination!"

9. **But now.** "But now in Christ you have chosen God to be your Father, or rather, God had identified you as his sons (*verse 6*). How can you possibly think of turning back and making yourselves again slaves to those weak and pitiful ruling spirits, by converting to Judaism???" The false teachers claimed to know God. Paul brings out the fact that it is much more important that God knows you and identifies you as his son or daughter!!!

again? ¹⁰You pay special attention to certain days, months, seasons, and years. ¹¹I am afraid for you! Can it be that all my work for you has been for nothing?

¹²I beg you, my brothers, be like me. After all, I am like you. You have not done me any wrong.

¹³You remember why I preached the gospel to you the first time; it was because I was sick. ¹⁴But you did not despise or reject me, even though my physical condition was a great trial to you. Instead, you received me as you would God's angel; you received me as you would Christ Jesus. ¹⁵You were so happy! What has happened? I myself can say this about you: you would have taken out your own eyes, if you could, and given them to me. ¹⁶Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

again? You are observing 10 special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for 11 you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

I plead with you, brothers, 12 become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. As you 13 know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even 14 though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. What has happened to 15 all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. Have I now become your 16 enemy by telling you the truth?

10. **You pay special attention.** "These holydays, even though Moses commanded them, are no more effective to gain the favor of God than were the pagan rites you formerly practiced when you worshiped idols." Both Paul and the Jewish Christians continued to pay special attention to these *holydays*, but the difference lies in *motive*. What Paul condemns is Christians doing these things with the idea of putting themselves right with God! Because this credits them with an *intrinsic sacredness* out of harmony with the true freedom of the Spirit. For the Christian, every day is equally holy, and no day is holy in the special sense that a holyday was to a Jew. Even the *Lord's Day* is not a "Christian Sabbath." [*Sabbath*, for a Christian, comes in Eternity!!!] Compare *Heb. 4:9-11*.]

11. **I am afraid for you!** "You seem to love these weak and pitiful spirits so much, that I am afraid for you! Can it be that my work has been for nothing? You do not seem to value and understand the freedom you have in Christ!"

12. **Be like me.** Paul may be thinking that as he gave up the advantages of Judaism to become free from The Law as they were, so they should remain free in Christ, as he is! *MacKnight* understands it: "*Brethren, I pray you to continue in friendship with me; for I am your true friend, having reproved you from love, and not from resentment. For all the time I was with you, ye injured me in nothing.*"

13. **You remember.** Some sickness sent Paul into their area originally, and they showed him great love and respect! *Ramsay* thinks it might have been malaria, and that he went into the highlands of Galatia hoping to recover.

14. **But you did not.** Even though Paul's physical condition put a strain on the Galatians, they did not despise him for it or reject him as unfit to be a messenger from God. *MacKnight* has Paul say: "You received me with as much respect as if I had been Christ Jesus himself."

15. **You were so happy!** "The Good News I preached to you then made you jubilant!!!" **What has happened?** "What has changed your attitude toward me???" **You would have.** This is a figure of speech describing great gratitude! Some think this implies that Paul's sickness was a chronic eye disease.

16. **Have I now?** "After all the love and devotion you showed to me your spiritual father, have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth of Christ and urging you to hold firmly to it???"

¹⁷Those other people show a deep concern for you, but their intentions are not good. All they want is to separate you from me, so that you will have the same concern for them as they have for you. ¹⁸Now, it is good to have such a deep concern for a good purpose—this is true always, and not only when I am with you. ¹⁹My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you, until Christ's nature is formed in you. ²⁰How I wish I were with you now, so that I could take a different attitude toward you. I am so worried about you!

The Example of Hagar and Sarah

²¹Let me ask those of you who want to be subject to the Law: do you not hear what the Law says? ²²It says that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman, the other by a free woman. ²³His son by the slave woman was born in the usual way, but his son by the free woman was

Those people are zealous ¹⁷ to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. It is fine to be zealous, ¹⁸ provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. My dear children, for ¹⁹ whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how ²⁰ I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Hagar and Sarah

Tell me, you who want to ²¹ be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that ²² Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His ²³ son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

17. **Those other people.** "The *circumcision party* claims to love you and to be working for your own good. But their intention is to turn you away from the truth of Christ, and to separate you from me." **So that you.** Compare what Jesus said in *Matt. 23:15*, and see note there.

18. **For a good purpose.** *Alford* understands this verse to say: "I have no wish, in thus writing, to set up an exclusive claim to show a deep concern for you - whoever will really teach you good, at any time, let him do it and welcome."

19. **My dear children!** From the deep concern of *verse 18*, Paul narrows it down by speaking as a *parent*. He had brought the Galatians *into the world* as spiritual children, and his claim on them is greater than any new teacher could have! **Until Christ's nature.** Their eternal destiny depends on their developing the knowledge, spirit, and qualities of Christ in themselves. This does not contradict salvation by faith, as *James 2:22* shows.

20. **How I wish.** "If I were with you now, I would better know just what to say to help you!"

21. **Do you not hear?** "The Law itself teaches that Abraham's descendants by faith, who will receive all God has for his sons, are not slaves to The Law!"

22. **Abraham had two sons.** "These two sons of Abraham are an example of what I mean."

23. **By the slave woman.** "This son was born through the natural strength of his parents, but being born a slave, he had no claim to receive his father's estate." **By the free woman.** "This son was born through supernatural strength that was given to his parents by God's promise. He was born free, and had claim to all that his father had."

born as a result of God's promise. ²⁴This can be taken as a figure: the two women are two covenants, one of which (Hagar, that is) comes from Mount Sinai, whose children are born in slavery. ²⁵Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia, and she is a figure of the present city of Jerusalem, a slave with all its people. ²⁶But the heavenly Jerusalem is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷For the scripture says,

"Be happy, woman who never had children!
Shout and cry with you, you who never
felt the pains of childbirth!

For the woman who was deserted will
have more children

than the woman living with her husband."

²⁸Now, you my brothers, are God's children as a result of his promise, just as Isaac was. ²⁹At that time the son who was born in the usual way persecuted the one who was born because of

These things may be taken ²⁴
figuratively, for the women
represent two covenants.
One covenant is from Mount
Sinai and bears children
who are to be slaves: This is
Hagar. Now Hagar stands ²⁵
for Mount Sinai in Arabia
and corresponds to the pre-
sent city of Jerusalem, be-
cause she is in slavery with
her children. But the Jeru- ²⁶
salem that is above is free,
and she is our mother. For ²⁷
it is written:

"Be glad, O barren
woman,

who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have no labor
pains;

there are more children of
the desolate woman
than of her who has a
husband."

Now you, brothers, like ²⁸
Isaac, are children of prom-
ise. At that time the son ²⁹
born in the ordinary way
persecuted the son born by
the power of the Spirit. It is

24. **A figure.** "These two women symbolize the two covenants by which men and women become the church and people of God. The one came from Mount Sinai, making Abraham's descendants by Isaac the only *visible church* and people of God, is symbolized by Hagar, whose children are born in slavery."

25. **She is a figure.** "She represents the present city of Jerusalem, that is, the Jewish church which was organized on that covenant, and is a slave with all its people, slaves to The Law."

26. **But the heavenly Jerusalem is free.** "But the *church* of Christ, the messianic community, which is made up of all who reach out through faith to seize Christ and make themselves part of Him, is free and not slave! It is organized on the covenant which comes from Mount Zion (*Heb. 12:22-24*), which I call the heavenly Jerusalem, both because its *completeness* will come in Eternity and because heaven is its source. The free woman, Sarah, is the symbol of this, and she is the mother of all who believe in Christ!"

27. **For the scripture says.** "What I say about the meaning of Abraham's wives and sons is not just something which I dreamed up! Isaiah spoke about this very thing (*Isa. 54:1*)! Sarah was the *deserted wife*, because when she could not have children, Abraham took Hagar as a second wife and by her had Ishmael. God's promise to Sarah was that she would be a mother of *nations*, and that comes true in the Gentiles converting to Christ!"

28. **Now, you.** "Even though you are not Abraham's descendants as we Jews are, yet like Isaac, who became their son by God's promise, you, my brothers, are God's children as a result of His promise! In this way, you are also children of Abraham and Sarah!"

29. **Persecuted the one.** "At that time, Ismael the slave son persecuted Isaac the free-born son. It is the same way now, when certain Jews who are *slave-sons* persecute us the *free-born-sons*!"

God's Spirit; and it is the same now. ³⁰But what does the scripture say? It says, "Throw out the slave woman and her son; for the son of the slave woman will not share the father's property with the son of the free woman." ³¹So then, my brothers, we are not the children of a slave woman, but of the free woman.

Preserve Your Freedom

5 Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free! Stand, then, as free men, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again.

²Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, it means that Christ is of no use to you at all. ³Once more I warn any man who allows himself to be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the whole Law. ⁴Those of you who try to be put right with God by obeying the Law have cut yourselves off from Christ. You

the same now. But what ³⁰ does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, ³¹ brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Freedom in Christ

5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free: Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. ² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every ³ man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

30. **But what does?** *Gen. 21:10*. "I show you that the scripture says to throw out the slave woman and her son. This means that all who have *no spiritual relationship* to God will be thrown out, no matter who their ancestors are. Only the true sons (and daughters) by the Promise of God, will share what the Father has for his sons!!!"

31. **But of the free woman.** "I have showed you from The Law itself that we who are God's children by faith, are Abraham's true descendants, born of the free woman, and we will receive our Father's property!!!"

1. **Freedom is what we have!** "Because Christians are the children of the free woman, you Gentiles must not allow yourselves to be made slaves again by believing that the Law of Moses is necessary to your salvation!!!"

2. **I, Paul, tell you this.** "As a true apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ I tell you this true fact: If you let yourselves be circumcised as if it were necessary for this to be done in order for you to be saved, Christ-on-the-cross will no longer be available to you!!"

3. **To be circumcised.** That is, with the idea of this being part of his salvation. As a national sign (*Acts 16:3*) or a health practice, everyone can be circumcised with no change at all in their relationship to Christ. But when a Gentile is circumcised to show he is placing himself under The Law, it cuts him off from the blessings of Christ. **To obey the whole Law.** Because the Law of Moses was so complicated and required expensive travel back to Jerusalem at certain times of the year, the false teachers told the Gentiles that they would only have to keep certain parts of The Law such as holydays (*Gal. 4:10*), Kosher dietary rules, not fraternizing with the uncircumcised, etc. Paul says plainly that if you place yourself under The Law, you are obligated to keep the entire mass of rules and regulations!! Compare *James 2:10* and note.

4. **Have cut yourselves off from Christ.** "By trying to be put right with God through The Law, you have in fact RENOUNCED Christ!!! Therefore you are outside God's GRACE and cannot expect to receive the PROMISE which comes through Christ-on-the-cross!!!"

are outside God's grace. ⁵As for us, our hope is that God will put us right with him; and this is what we wait for, by the power of God's Spirit working through our faith. ⁶For when we are in union with Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor the lack of it makes any difference at all; what matters is faith that works through love.

⁷You were doing so well! Who made you stop obeying the truth? How did he persuade you?

⁸It was not done by God, who calls you. ⁹"It takes only a little yeast to raise the whole batch of dough," as they say. ¹⁰But I still feel sure about you. Our union in the Lord makes me confident that you will not take a different view, and that the man who is upsetting you, whoever he is, will be punished by God.

¹¹But as for me, brothers, why am I still persecuted if I continue to preach that circumcision is necessary? If that were true, then my preaching about the cross of Christ would cause no

But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be. Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the

5. **Our hope.** "We who are in Christ look forward to the time when God will put us right with himself by setting our whole being free in the Resurrection (Rom. 8:18-23)! God's Spirit who lives in us Christians (Rom. 8:11) is both the guarantee and the means of this!!!" [Compare the contrast in Gal. 3:2, 5. The Spirit does not make himself available to people through The Law!!!]

6. **For when we are.** "In our union with Christ, such things as circumcision have no meaning at all!!! It is that faith which works through love, that God counts!!!"

7. **You were doing so well!** "You were making such great progress in the Good News of Christ! You were really living God's truth!!! How could you let anyone talk you out of it???"

8. **It was not done by God.** "God calls people to be saved (John 6:44-45), but I have already showed you from The Law itself that God's promise does not come through The Law! Certainly God himself would not now be calling you to obey The Law!!!"

9. **It takes only a little yeast.** "The errors of one teacher are enough to turn a whole church away from the truth!!!"

10. **But I still feel sure.** "I do not want you to think you are beyond God's reach. I still have confidence in you, because of our union in the Lord. But God will punish the man who is upsetting you by the things he teaches!"

11. **But as for me.** "My enemies tell you that I still preach circumcision, and perhaps point to Timothy as an example. But if that were true, why would they continue to persecute me??? If I did preach that circumcision were necessary to salvation, my offensive preaching about Christ-on-the-cross would cause no trouble with the circumcision party and the unbelieving Jews!" (Compare 1 Cor. 1:23 and note.)

trouble. ¹²I wish that the people who are upsetting you would go all the way; let them go on and castrate themselves!

¹³As for you, my brothers, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires rule you. Instead, let love make you serve one another.

¹⁴For the whole Law is summed up in one commandment: "Love your fellowman as yourself."

¹⁵But if you act like animals, hurting and harming each other, then watch out, or you will completely destroy one another.

The Spirit and Human Nature

¹⁶What I say is this: let the Spirit direct your lives, and do not satisfy the desires of the human nature. ¹⁷For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what human nature wants. The two are enemies, and this means

cross has been abolished. As ¹²for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Life by the Spirit

You, my brothers, were ¹³called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge your sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up ¹⁴in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and ¹⁵devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, live by the Spirit, ¹⁶and you will not gratify the desires of your sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires ¹⁷what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do

12. **I wish.** Both the TEV and the NIV give the *literal* translation of what Paul actually said. Paul is speaking in *bitter irony!* The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "ΑΡΟΚΟΠΣΟΝΤΑΙ. This word was habitually used to describe the practice of mutilation which was so prevalent in the Phrygian worship of Cybele. The Galatians were necessarily familiar with it, and it can hardly bear any other sense."

13. **You were called to be free.** "The Good News of Christ has called you *out* from slavery *into* the freedom which Christ gives!" **But do not let.** "Your freedom does not mean you are free to sin as you please!" **Instead.** "Let love be the motivation of your life to such a degree that you will serve one another, in a spirit of *community!*"

14. **For the whole Law.** "The Law of Moses is *condensed* in this one commandment: Love your fellowman as yourself. You cannot please God without doing this!!!" Compare *Matt. 22:39; Rom. 13:8; 1 John 4:20.*

15. **But if you act like animals.** "But if, in your *frantic action* either for or against The Law, you begin to act like animals, hurting and harming one another as you bite and devour each other, *watch out!!!* You may condemn each other to hell!!!" Compare *Acts 26:9-11; James 4:1-5.*

16. **Let the Spirit.** The voice of the Spirit speaks through the New Testament especially, and as we listen to Him speak and guide our lives by what He says, we will avoid the evil desires of human nature that make us bite and devour each other.

17. **Is opposed.** "The evil desires of our human nature (*verse 20-21*) are in conflict with what the Spirit wants us to do (*verses 22-23*)." **This means.** "If you are to live your life in the Spirit, you cannot please yourself and do everything you are tempted to do."

that you cannot do what you want to do. ¹⁸If the Spirit leads you, then you are not subject to the Law.

¹⁹What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; ²⁰in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies, they fight, become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; ²¹they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not receive the Kingdom of God.

²²But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace,

not do what you want. But ¹⁸if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and ²⁰witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit ²²is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith-

18. **If the Spirit leads you.** "If you listen to the Spirit speak through the teaching of the Good News (see note on *Rom. 3:31*), as sons and daughters of God (*Rom. 8:14*) you have escaped from the curse of The Law!!! You have no need to be circumcised and follow its ritual!!!"

19. **What human nature does.** Paul is talking about the evil side of our human nature, not ordinary human desires and needs. Even Christians still have this *evil side*, as the case of the Galatian Christians show. The Devil tries to use this *side* of us to seduce us to sin!!! **Immoral.** Sex acts outside the marriage relationship [fornication]. **Filthy.** Such things as pornography, that lead to adultery, homosexuality, and immorality in general. **Indecent actions.** Sinning openly and not caring who knows it! The sort of things that shocks public morals.

20. **Idols.** Worship to these included obscene and bizarre practices. **Witchcraft.** This formed part of idolatry. The pagan priests claimed to be able to speak with and control the evil spirits. By this they frightened people and made themselves rich. **Enemies.** Who bear grudges against each other and will never forgive and forget. **Fight.** Hostility, such as the kind that brings on unreasonable lawsuits. Compare *1 Cor. 6:7*. **Jealous.** Which leads to selfish scheming and plotting against others. **Angry.** Violent, uncontrolled anger. **Ambitious.** The selfish spirit that is willing to crush others just to *get ahead*. **Separate.** The spirit that causes people to form parties and groups (sects) in religion out of selfish motives.

21. **Envious.** The success of others makes them unhappy. **Get drunk.** Drunkenness has always been a sin. **Have orgies.** Drunken dancing that leads to immoral actions and the attitude of indecency. **Those who do these things.** Part of the preaching of the Good News, was this warning that those who continue to rebel against God by doing such things as these will have no part in the Eternal Kingdom!!!

22. **But the Spirit produces.** Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*). The real evidence of the Spirit living in them, is not speaking in tongues and miraculous powers! The real evidence is these things which Paul now mentions. These are what the Holy Spirit produces as *fruits* in the *branches* of the *true vine* (*John 15:1-10*). **Love.** AGAPE - Christian love. See *1 Cor. ch 13*. **Joy.** Love induces joy in the Christian! Jesus was a "man of sorrows" to some degree, yet he was also a man of joy (*Heb. 12:2*) and showed a sense of humor in the things he said to the Pharisees. Joy is especially associated with the Holy Spirit (compare *Rom. 14:17; 1 Thess. 1:6*). Joy contrasts with apathy, gloom, remorse, etc. **Peace.** An inner harmony and serenity. The Christian can have a different attitude toward everyone and everything, because he is a refugee, a citizen of another world!!! Just a short time and he will be going home!!! **Patience.** Being able to put up with the other people's faults. The endurance of wrong without anger to revenge. **Kindness.** The attitude that actively reaches out with a helping hand to others. It is both gentle and generous. **Goodness.** This is the motive behind kindness. Compare *1 Cor. 13:6*. **Faithfulness.** Reliability, loyalty.

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death their human nature, with all its passions and desires. ²⁵The Spirit has given us life; he must also control our lives. ²⁶We must not be proud, or irritate one another, or be jealous of one another.

Bear One Another's Burdens

6 My brothers, if someone is caught in any kind of wrongdoing; those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way. And keep an eye on yourself, so that you will not be tempted, too. ²Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you

fulness, gentleness and self- 23
control. Against such things 24
there is no law. Those who
belong to Christ Jesus have
crucified their sinful nature
with its passions and desires.
Since we live by the Spirit, 25
let us keep in step with the
Spirit. Let us not become 26
conceited, provoking and
envying each other.

Doing Good to All

6 Brothers, if a man is 2
trapped in some sin, you
who are spiritual should re-
store him gently. But watch
yourself; you also may be 2
tempted. Carry each other's
burdens, and in this way you
will fulfill the law of Christ.

23. **Humility.** Not proud or arrogant, but willing to listen to others and willing to cooperate. Compare 2 Cor. 10:1 and note. It is the *meeekness* of Matt. 5:5 and note. **Self-control.** See 1 Cor. 6:12 and note. **There is no law.** "To praise these good qualities which the Spirit produces, I remind you that there never was a law of a religion which prohibited these things or that punished a man for doing them!!!"

24. **Have put to death.** The New birth of waste and the Spirit (*John 3:5*) marks the dividing line between the world and the church. In dying with Christ and being buried in the liquid grave (*Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12*) you have put to death and crucified with Christ the evil side of human nature. Your love to Christ and your loyalty to him, will not allow you to follow the evil desires of your human nature!

25. **The Spirit.** "The Spirit has given us life (*Titus 3:5*) and we are free (*2 Cor. 3:17-18*). Therefore, we must permit Him to control our lives, by actively following his instructions (*Rom. 8:5-9*)."

26. **We must not be.** These things destroy Christian community and fellowship!

1. **My brothers.** Paul begins to emphasize the spirit of *community* which is a very necessary part of the church of Christ. Even those who are being *led by the Spirit* sometimes are surprised into sin. Compare *Gal. 2:11-13; 1 John 1:8-10*. The *normal human thing* to do, is to be hostile to those who sin. The *Christian thing* to do is to set them right. It is the special responsibility of the *spiritual* to do this. But it must be done in a gentle way, because hostility might destroy the very one you are trying to save. **And keep an eye on yourself.** Don't think you are immune to temptation! Being aware of our own weakness will help us to be gentle toward others.

2. **Help carry.** "Instead of being hostile and scolding one another, you must *help each other* carry burdens.' This is the spirit of *community* Burden = BARE! *MacKnight* says: "This is an allusion to the custom of travelers, who when too heavily laden with their baggage, relieve one another, by bearing the burden of the weak or fatigued, and in that manner show their good disposition toward each other." **The law of Christ** requires benevolence and good will even to those who are surprised into sin.

will obey the law of Christ. ³If someone thinks he is something, when he really is nothing, he is only fooling himself. ⁴Each one should judge his own conduct for himself. If it is good, then he can be proud of what he himself has done, without having to compare it with what someone else has done. ⁵For everyone has to carry his own load.

⁶The man who is being taught the Christian message should share all the good things he has with his teacher.

⁷Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of God. A man will reap exactly what he plants. ⁸If he plants in the field of his natural desires, from it he will gather the harvest of death; if he plants in the field of the Spirit, from the Spirit he will gather the harvest of eternal life. ⁹So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when

If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each man should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each man should carry his own load.

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we

3. **If someone.** "If you are so proud of your own righteousness that you are hostile to your weak brother and will not help him, you are only fooling yourself. When you think you are too strong to fall, you are living in a *fool's paradise!*"

4. **Should judge his own.** "You must not use the faults of others as the standard for your own conduct. There is no honor in looking at your brother and saying, 'I am better than you!' If what you do is good, measured by God's standard, then you can be proud of your actions."

5. **For everyone.** "At the Judgment, each of us will have to answer for himself!" Load = *PHORTION*. This can also mean that certain things (such as sickness) and the normal duties of life must be the responsibility of the individual and cannot be shared.

6. **The man who is being taught.** The idea is that the one who is being taught ought to support the one who is teaching him. Food, money, housing, etc., is the general meaning. But it goes deeper than this, and Paul may be thinking of spiritual support as well.

7. **No one makes a fool of God.** No one can avoid or evade the laws by which God rules the universe. **Exactly.** "Whatever you plant, that is what you can expect to reap!!!"

8. **If he plants.** Paul may be scolding the Galatians for their selfish use of their money. That is, spending it all on their own pleasures, and not giving a share to the Lord's work (*verse 6*). The moral principal is: *continued self-indulgence brings its own penalty.* **From the Spirit.** Material things will perish, even our own bodies. The spiritual is eternal! If, then, we spend our time and money and ourselves planting in the field of the Spirit, the result will be eternal companionship with Christ!!!

9. **Not become tired.** "You must continue to do good, whether it is to help carry another's burdens, taking care of the sick, sharing sympathy and material things with another, and lifting up Christ in your lives. God will give you all that he promised!"

we will reap the harvest. ¹⁰So then, as often as we have the chance, we should do good to everyone, but especially to those who belong to our family in the faith.

Final Warning and Greeting

¹¹See what big letters I make as I write to you now with my own hand! ¹²Those who want to show off and brag about external matters are the ones who are trying to force you to be circumcised. They do it, however, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³Even those who practice circumcision do not obey the Law; they want you to be circumcised so they can boast that you submitted to this physical ceremony. ¹⁴As for me, however, I will boast only of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for by means of his cross the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world. ¹⁵It does not matter at all whether or not one is circumcised. What does

do not give up. Therefore, ¹⁰ as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Not Circumcision but a New Creation

See what large letters I ¹¹ use as I write to you with my own hand!

Those who want to make ¹² a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even ¹³ those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. May I never boast ¹⁴ except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor ¹⁵ uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new

10. **We should do good to everyone.** "We should do good to everyone, whatever their country or religion should be or whatever their physical appearance. But we do have a special responsibility to those who belong to our family in the faith."

11. **See what big letters.** Paul had someone else write down his letters, but he usually wrote the ending in his own handwriting to prove the letter really came from him. The fact that he says "big letters" causes some to think he had trouble being able to see well. See note on *Gal. 4:15*.

12. **Those.** Some of your teachers want to show off and be popular with their unbelieving friends, and so they try to force you to be circumcised. It is not because they think circumcision is necessary to being put right with God. They only want to escape from the shame of the cross, and avoid persecution from their unbelieving friends."

13. **Even those.** "Those of the circumcision party do not obey The Law themselves! They are really hypocrites when they try to force you to be circumcised. They only want to be able to boast that you submitted to this physical ceremony." [Note that it is Gentile Christians, who have already been baptized into Christ, whom the *circumcision party* tried to force into the physical ceremony of circumcision.]

14. **I will boast only of the cross.** To some, the *cross* symbolized shame and disgrace. But to Paul, Christ-on-the-cross was God's act to set men free!!! **For by means.** "The world can no longer seduce me or frighten me! By means of HIS CROSS, the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world. In Christ I am no longer under the control of sin and death!!!"

15. **It does not matter at all.** "I boast in Christ-on-the-cross, my only hope of salvation and the only means of my being put right with God!!! Whether anyone is circumcised or uncircumcised does not matter at all, because the only thing that puts us in God's favor is being a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)."

matter is being a new creature. ¹⁶As for those who follow this rule in their lives, may peace and mercy be with them—with them and with all God's people!

¹⁷To conclude: let no one give me any more trouble, because the scars I have on my body show that I am the slave of Jesus.

¹⁸May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, my brothers. Amen

creation. Peace and mercy ¹⁶ to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

Finally, let no one cause ¹⁷ me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

The grace of our Lord ¹⁸ Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

16. **Who follow this rule.** "To you believing Gentiles who follow this rule (*verse 15*) and who come to God by being a new creature in Christ, may peace and mercy be with you, and with all God's people! Peace in this life, and mercy at Christ's coming!!!"

17. **To conclude.** "Let no one give me any more trouble by saying I am not a true apostle. Like a slave who has been branded, I have on my body the scars which show I belong to Christ. These are much better proofs that I am really Christ's servant, than the marks of circumcision!"

18. **May the grace.** Paul's benediction is deeply sincere and friendly! Paul has scolded them harshly, but they are "*my brothers.*" [The controversy over circumcision and The Law probably began as soon as the first uncircumcised Gentile converted to Christ. But the real issue was between Christ-on-the-cross (*I Cor. 1:23* and note) and the Christ-but-not-the-cross which the circumcision party wanted to have.]

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Paul the apostle fulfilled his mission from God by planting the church of Christ in the population centers of the world. The Good News which told of God's act in Jesus Christ to set men free rapidly took root in the hearts and minds of the teeming masses who populated the great cities such as Ephesus. Here was, at one and the same time, the greatest opportunity to take Christ *to* the world, but also the greatest challenge *from* the world!!!

Two special challenges for the church of Christ (messianic community) were (1) The ostentatious and pompous worship of Judaism, especially as it centered in the Temple at Jerusalem. (2) The pagan *mystery religions* which claimed to hold the secrets of God. Both *pagentry* and the idea of *knowing secrets which are withheld from the common man* fascinate we human beings. Therefore these things *can be dangerous* to your Christian life!

Ephesians is purposely designed to restrain the enchantment which the *mystery religions* still held for the Gentile converts, and also to counteract the false arguments of the *circumcision party* by which they tried to seduce the Gentile Christians into submitting to the Law of Moses. Paul did not want *two* churches, one Jewish and one Gentile! In this Letter he stresses the *unity* of The Church, and the fact that Jews and Gentiles become **ONE** in Christ!!! Some of the problem which the early church faced may be seen in this fragment of prayer in the Jewish synagogue: "Blessed be thou O Lord our God . . . who has not made me a Gentile . . . who has not made me a slave . . . who has not made me a woman!"

Paul wrote this while in prison at Rome, about 62 A.D.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

1 From Paul, who by God's will is an apostle of Christ Jesus—

To God's people who live in Ephesus, those who are faithful in their life in Christ Jesus:

²May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For he has blessed us, in our union with Christ, by giving us every spiritual gift in the heavenly world. ⁴Before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his in Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love, ⁵God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would bring us to himself as his sons—this was his pleasure and purpose. ⁶Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son!

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

The the saints, in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **2**

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **3**
4
5
6

1. From Paul. It was the custom to state the writer's name at the beginning of a letter. Note that Paul stresses the fact that he is an apostle by God's will! Compare note on *Gal. 1:1*. **To God's people.** The CHURCH of Christ is uniquely *God's people!!!* [*Saints*: see note on *1 Cor. 6:11*.]

2. May God. See note on *Rom. 1:7*.

3. Let us give thanks! "God has blessed not only the Jews but also you Gentiles, with all the riches of heaven!!! And he has done this without making the Law of Moses a condition to salvation!!!"

4. Before. "What God did in Christ was not an *afterthought* or an act of desperation on his part. Salvation comes to you Gentiles because God planned it that way even before the world was made." **God had already chosen us.** "Before there was Jew or Gentile, God chose to have a people for himself, the whole *church* of Christ, people of the covenant, limited to no one earthly race." **Holy and without fault.** "Accepted as holy because of Christ (*Rom. 8:3-4 and notes*), not because of Jewish or pagan rites."

5. God had already decided. "God had already decided that we, the church of Christ, should be adopted as his children!" *Johnson* says: "The whole line of argument is general instead of particular. God foreordained a church which should be composed of those adopted as his children."

6. For his glorious grace! "We praise God for his goodness which he displayed to us in the free gift of life which he gave us in his dear son!"

⁷For by the death of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, ⁸which he gave to us in such large measure! In all his wisdom and insight ⁹God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. ¹⁰God's plan, which he will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.

¹¹All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the

7. **For by the death of Christ.** Death and blood cannot be separated! Death = blood = Christ-on-the-cross!!! "In the church of Christ you Gentiles have the promise of being put right with God through the death of Christ as our sin-offering!!! Our sins are forgiven and we are set free!!!" See notes on *Acts 8:39-40*. Compare *Col. 1:13* and note.

8. **In such large measure!** "Rather than only revealing his secret to a very few, God gave us his grace in a measure beyond our imagination!!!" Compare *1 Cor. 2:6-10*; *1 Pet. 4:18* and notes.

9. **And made known to us.** "God made this VISION OF THE AGES known to us apostles by his Spirit (*1 Cor. 2:10*), and through us to you! God's secret is known by all who have been made God's children through their faith!" Some may have said that the GOSPEL was a "modern thing" and not to be trusted. In these verses, Paul shows us that this was ALWAYS God's plan and purpose, kept secret until the *right time*, and revealed IN the Christ of history!!! Compare *Luke 9:31* and note.

10. **God's plan.** "God's plan is to bring everything in all of creation into a UNITY with Jesus Christ as head!" Compare *Col. 1:15-20* and notes. **Which he will complete.** God's act in Christ is complete!! But the effects of it will not have all taken place until death is destroyed in the Resurrection! Compare *1 John 3:1-3* and notes. Our salvation will not be complete until our whole being is set free by our bodies being redeemed (*Rom. 8:23*). In contrast, many of the mystery religions said that our salvation would be completed by our becoming disembodied spirits.

11. **According to.** God rules over history. In the message of the Good News, God's plan and decision, which he had already decided from the beginning of the world, was revealed to the entire world! Christ is the sole means or agent through whom God's predetermined (foreordained) purpose of putting men right with himself is fulfilled. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The fact that we were made the heritage of God is thus declared to have been no incidental thing, nor an event belonging only to time or one having its explanation in ourselves, but a change in our life founded on and resulting from the eternal foreordaining purpose of God Himself." *Lipscomb* says: "God foreordained the provisions of salvation, the characters that should be saved, and the conditions and tests by which they would be saved. He left every man free to choose or reject the terms and provisions of salvation and in so doing to refuse to form the character God has foreordained to be his children and so predestined to everlasting life." Compare *Rom. 8:29-30* and notes.

very beginning. ¹²Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God's glory!

¹³And so it was with you also: when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation, you believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. ¹⁴The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!

purpose of his will, in order ¹² that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And ¹³ you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. In him, when you believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is ¹⁴ a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

For this reason, I, since I ¹⁵ heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, have never ¹⁶ stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that ¹⁷ the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the ¹⁸ eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheri-

Paul's Prayer

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks to God for you. I remember you in my prayers, ¹⁷and ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give you the Spirit, who will make you wise and reveal God to you, so that you will know him. ¹⁸I ask that your minds may be opened to see his light, so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his

12. **Who were the first to hope.** "We Jews waited many centuries for the Messiah to come, and we who were the first to believe in Christ have this hope, not through the Law of Moses, but through the free gift of Jesus Christ! We praise God's glory in what he has done!!!" Compare *Heb. 12:23* and note.

13. **With you also.** "When you heard the Good News, you reached out through faith to seize Christ and make yourself part of Him!" **His stamp of ownership.** The Jew viewed circumcision as God's stamp of ownership on him. Here Paul identifies the *Holy Spirit* received in baptism (*Acts 2:38*) with *circumcision* (*Col. 2:11-13*).

14. **The Spirit is the guarantee.** "What God has promised his people is not complete until our bodies are changed (*Phil. 3:20-21*). The (indwelling) Spirit that each Christian receives (*John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38; 5:32*) is our guarantee that this will take place!!!" **Complete freedom** = the redemption of the purchased people. Paul stresses *freedom*, possibly because the *mystery religions* claimed to offer unusual freedom.

15. **For this reason.** "Because the Spirit is the guarantee of our complete freedom." **Ever since.** He says this to show that he is *aware* of their faith and love.

16. **Giving thanks.** Paul always praises God for the faith of sincere Christians!!!

17. **To give you the Spirit.** "I continually ask God who is the source of our eternal hope to give you the supernatural gifts from the Spirit. He will make you wise (*1 Cor. 12:8*) and reveal God to you as you understand the truth we have preached to you."

18-19. **To see his light.** We cooperate with God in our salvation, and as we reach out to him through faith, he also reaches out to us. As we make ourselves receptive to his truth, he opens our minds. It is

people, ¹⁹and how very great is his power at work in us who believe. This power in us is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰which he used when he raised Christ from death, and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. ²¹Christ rules there above all heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords; he is above all titles of power in this world and in the next. ²²God put all things under Christ's feet, and gave him to the church as supreme Lord over all things. ²³The church is Christ's body, the completion of him who himself completes all things everywhere.

tance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which ²⁰he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, ²³the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

From Death to Life

2 In the past you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins. ²At that time

Made Alive in Christ

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgres-

a paradox that the more we learn about God, the more we are able to learn (*1 Cor. 2:14*). His light makes it possible for us to see (1) *the hope* we have as spiritual descendants of Abraham; (2) *how rich* are the wonderful blessings God has for us in eternity; (3) *how very great* is his power which sets us free from guilt and punishment and will raise us from death! **This power.** See *2 Cor. 4:16-18* and notes.

20. Which he used. See *Rom. 8:11* and note. **And seated him.** To show that Christ is King and rules the universe, God seated him at his right side, the place of honor! Compare *1 Cor. 15:25*.

21. Above all. Both Judaism and the mystery religions viewed God as unapproachable with angels arranged in layers as go-betweens. Heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords were names they gave to different ranks in the angelic world. Paul shows Jesus Christ, the God/Man sitting not only in God's presence, but at God's right side!!! Jesus has bypassed the angels to make a direct link between man and God!!! **All titles of power.** This makes Jesus Christ superior to everyone and everything except God the Father himself! Compare *Col. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 3:10*.

22. God put all things. See *1 Cor. 15:27. Gave him to the church.* Paul usually means *local congregation* when he says *church*, but here he means the universal church which is composed of all the saved - the messianic community in its widest sense. This church is Christ's *body* and Christ himself is the *head* of that body. See *Col. 1:18; 2:19*.

23. The completion. The church *completes* Christ in the sense that the church is the visible declaration that Christ is Lord!!! Paul stresses the close connection between Christ and his church!!! See note on *Acts 9:5*. This also can be translated *fullness* as the NIV has done. *Lipscomb* says: "Jesus filled with all the fullness of God bestows the fullness of his blessings on his body, the church." Paul shows the Ephesians how very inferior in both dignity and happiness the members of pagan fellowships and mystery religions are, when compared with the members of Christ's church!!! The *church* of Christ is a fellowship protected and ruled by *One* whom God has raised to the highest position in the Universe, in order to make the members of the Christian fellowship (church) holy and happy through all eternity!!! Notice the *church* does not terminate, but continues on into Eternity!!! Compare *Rev. 19:7-9; 21:1-5*.

1. You were spiritually dead. "In the past, even though you knew mysteries and secrets, you were spiritually dead in disobedience and sins."

you followed the world's evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. ³Actually all of us were like them, and lived according to our natural desires, and did whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds. Like everyone else, we too were naturally bound to suffer God's wrath.

⁴But God's mercy is so abundant, and his love for us is so great, ⁵that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience he brought us to life with Christ. It is by God's grace that you have been saved. ⁶In our union with Christ Jesus he raised us up with him to rule with him in the heavenly world. ⁷He did this to demonstrate for all time to come the extraordinary greatness of his grace in the love he showed us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by God's grace that you have been saved, through faith. It is not your own doing,

sions and sins, in which you ²
used to live when you follow-
ed the ways of this world and
of the ruler of the kingdom
of the air, the spirit who is
now at work in those who
are disobedient. All of us ³
also lived among them at
one time, gratifying the
cravings of our sinful nature
and following its desires and
thoughts. Like the rest, we
were by nature objects of
wrath. But because of his ⁴
great love for us, God, who
is rich in mercy, made us
alive with Christ even when
we were dead in transgres-
sions—it is by grace you ⁵
have been saved. And God
raised us up with Christ and
seated us with him in the
heavenly realms in Christ ⁶
Jesus, in order that in the
coming ages he might show
the incomparable riches of
his grace, expressed in his
kindness to us in Christ ⁷
Jesus. For it is by grace you
have been saved, through
faith—and this not from
yourselves, it is the gift of ⁸

2. **You followed.** "The evil powers who control this age and shape the lives of men separate man from God! The mysteries and secrets you knew came from this source." Both Jewish and pagan thought placed the evil spirits and angels in space and even the air itself.

3. **Were like them.** "Even we Jews lived like this, slaves to our human natures, controlled by the Devil, doomed to suffer God's wrath!" Paul shows by this that the Law of Moses was not as effective as the *circumcision party* claimed. Also, he shows the Jewish Christians that they were just as dead in disobedience and sins in the past, and equally needed to be made alive by Christ! Compare *Rom. 3:9-20*.

4. **But God's mercy.** This tragic and helpless situation of man, *sets the stage* for God to reveal his mercy and his love to *both Jew and Gentile*!!

5. **He brought us to life with Christ.** "God acted in history at a time when the world was spiritually dead. God brought Jews and Gentiles to life with Christ by raising Him from the dead (*Acts 13:32-33; 2 Cor. 5:15-17*), and we share in this life by acting out the events of the Cross (*Col. 2:11-13; 1 Pet. 3:21*). I say it is by God's grace you have been saved, since only God's grace could give life to the dead!!!"

6. **In our union.** "We became Christians by being united to Christ (*Gal. 3:27*), and in this union God raised us to life from our dead spiritual state (*Col. 2:12*). But more than this, in our union with Christ Jesus we are now ruling with him in the heavenly world (*Col. 3:1-4; Rev. 5:10 and notes*). The messianic community of the redeemed in the present is a fulfillment in part of God's promise of Eternity!"

7. **To demonstrate for all time.** See *1 Tim. 1:16* and note. "This shows, that in every age of time, all who believe and reach out through faith to seize Christ, may expect forgiveness and new life in Christ!!!"

8. **For it is.** "Neither the works of The Law nor the secrets of the mystery religions could ever save you and set you free from ignorance and superstition. Only God's grace could make that available to you. Salvation is the gift of God through faith! You seize it, not achieve it!!!" [Note: in the Greek, FAITH is feminine but IT is neuter. Faith is not the gift, but salvation is! The Holy Spirit produces faith through the message of the Good News (*Rom. 10:17*). But faith is more than just believing (*James 2:19*).]

but God's gift. ⁹There is nothing here to boast of, since it is not the result of your own efforts. ¹⁰God is our Maker, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good works, which he has already prepared for us to do.

One in Christ

¹¹You Gentiles by birth—who are called the uncircumcised by the Jews, who call themselves the circumcised (which refers to what men themselves do on their bodies)—remember what you were in the past. ¹²At that time you were apart from Christ. You were foreigners, and did not belong to God's chosen people. You had no part in the covenants, which were based on God's promises to his people. You lived in this world without hope and without God. ¹³But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the death of Christ. ¹⁴For Christ himself has brought us peace, by making the Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies.

God—not by works, so that 9
no one can boast. For we are 10
God's workmanship, creat-
ed in Christ Jesus to do good
works, which God prepared
in advance for us to do.

One in Christ

Therefore, remember that 11
formerly you who are Gen-
tiles by birth and called "un-
circumcised" by those who
call themselves "the circum-
cision" (that done in the
body by the hands of men)—
remember that at that time 12
you were separate from
Christ, excluded from citi-
zenship in Israel and for-
eigners to the covenants of
the promise, without hope
and without God in the
world. But now in Christ 13
Jesus you who once were far
away have been brought
near through the blood of
Christ.

For he himself is our 14
peace, who has made the
two one and has destroyed
the barrier, the dividing wall

9. **There is nothing.** "Your salvation did not come through the rites of The Law nor through a knowledge of secrets and mysteries. It isn't the result of your own efforts, therefore there is nothing here to boast about!"

10. **God is our Maker.** "But though we cannot save ourselves by the good deeds we might do prior to our converting to Christ, yet in our union with Christ Jesus God has *created us* for a lifetime of good works by which we praise and worship Him. He has *programed* the world to demand the best from us, and he has taught us how we should live, through the Good News and the influence of the Spirit." Compare *Matt. 25:31-46; Gal. 5:22-26*.

11. **You Gentiles.** "To strengthen your sense of God's goodness in saving you, and to show you the obligation that this salvation places on you to live a life of good works, I ask you to remember what you were in the past. The Jews despised you and called you *the uncircumcised!* But of course they were wrong to boast about something done by men themselves on their own bodies."

12. **At that time.** "At that time in the past, you had no promise of The Messiah, and you could not belong to God's chosen people!" **Covenants.** See *Rom. 9:4-5*. **Without.** With neither hope nor God, they lived futile lives!!!

13. **But now.** "But now through the bloody-death of Christ, the Jewish Messiah, you who were formerly *excluded* from God's temple at Jerusalem are brought near to God by being built into Christ's church, the messianic community of the saved!"

14. **For Christ himself.** "Christ died for the Gentiles as well as the Jews! With his own body of flesh, he brought us peace by breaking down the wall of The Law, which like the *wall of separation* in the Jewish temple, *included* the Jews but *excluded* all others!"

¹⁵He abolished the Jewish Law, with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with himself, in this way making peace. ¹⁶By his death on the cross Christ destroyed the enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God. ¹⁷So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all—to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. ¹⁸It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.

¹⁹So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now fellow-citizens with God's people, and members of the family of God. ²⁰You, too, are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself. ²¹He is the one who holds the whole building together and makes

of hostility, by abolishing in ¹⁵ his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this ¹⁶ one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He ¹⁷ came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we ¹⁸ both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no ¹⁹ longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built ²⁰ on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him ²¹ the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

15. He abolished the Jewish Law. "By the bloody-death of his Cross, he abolished the Jewish Law with all its rites!!! He did this to create ONE NEW PEOPLE in union with himself." On the wall between Jews and Gentiles, see *Acts 10:28*.

16. By his death. *Christ-on-the-cross* (see note on *1 Cor. 1:23*). The Cross destroys the enmity between Jew and Gentile, and the enmity of the sinner toward God; unites both races into *one body* (Christ's church, see notes on *Matt. 16:18*) through the *new birth* (*Titus 3:5*) and brings them back to God (*Col. 1:20*).

17. So Christ came and preached. See *Heb. 1:2* and note. Paul points back to the First Coming and God's finished work in Christ! The long awaited time has now come and the apostles and the church announce the Good News of peace!!! Compare *Isa. 52:7; 57:19 Zech. 9:10; Rom. 10:15*.

18. That all of us. To see the *king*, you had to be introduced by someone close to him. Paul is using this symbolism to say that it is *only through* Christ that any of us can be introduced to God and come in/by the *one Spirit* (*1 Cor. 12:13*) into the presence of the Father.

19. So then. "Being formed into *one people* (Christ's church) along with the Jews, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer! You share the covenants of promise and are members of the family of God! House of God = household of God = family of God = Christ's church = messianic community of the saved.

20. You too. "The Jews, and you Gentiles too, are built into the spiritual temple of God as *living stones* (*1 Pet. 2:5*)! You are built on the foundation which the apostles and prophets laid by proclaiming the Good News (*Eph. 3:5*), and the cornerstone which unites the two sides of the building is Christ Jesus himself!"

21. He is the one. "As the cornerstone, Christ is the one who holds the whole building together by destroying the hostility between Jews and Gentiles. He makes it grow into a sacred temple (*1 Cor. 3:16*) by bringing new members (converts) into the *community* (church). In this sacred temple, the Lord Jesus is High Priest!"

it grow into a sacred temple in the Lord. ²²In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a house where God lives through his Spirit.

Paul's Work for the Gentiles

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles, pray to God. ²Surely you have heard that God, in his grace, has given me this work to do for your good. ³God revealed his secret plan and made it known to me. (I have written briefly about this, 'and if you will read what I have written you can learn my understanding of the secret of

And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Paul the Preacher to the Gentiles

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to be by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of

22. **You too are being built.** You Gentile Christians (along with Jewish Christians) are being built [present continuous] into a house (made of living stones held together by love) where God lives (*Acts 7:48; 17:24*) through his Spirit!" *Lipscomb* says: "The New Testament clearly recognizes each separate congregation as the body of Christ. So that God through his Spirit dwells in each distinct and separate church. The church is the body of Christ in the community in which it is situated. It is not a foot in Corinth, an arm in Ephesus, an eye in Philippi, an ear in Antioch. But each was a complete integral body of Christ composed of all the different members needed to make up his body." Each congregation is the visible body of Christ. In sum-total, they form the invisible body of Christ, the *one church* which he built (*Matt. 16:18*).

1. **For this reason.** "Because of the truth that God had already decided to adopt the Gentiles as children (*Eph. 1:5*), I am the prisoner of Christ Jesus for your sake." Since Paul writes from his imprisonment in Rome, it is important the Ephesians do not misunderstand his suffering or be discouraged by it. The main subject of *verses 1-13* is God's *call* to the Gentiles and Paul's *mission* as an apostle to take the Good News to the Gentiles. He reminds his readers of the *secret* of that call, how the *call* was revealed to the apostles and prophets, and his own commission to the service of preaching the Good News to the Gentiles; and to show that God's grace opened the *church* to those who were not part of national Israel.

2. **That God.** "You cannot doubt that I am imprisoned for the sake of you Gentiles, since you have heard about the mission God gave me, to preach the Good News to you without requiring you to obey the Law of Moses!" Compare *Gal. 1:13-16*.

3. **His secret plan.** To Paul, a secret or mystery is something hidden until the time comes for it to be revealed. Compare *1 Cor. 2:6-10*. I have written briefly. *Johnson* thinks Paul means what he has already written in this Letter (*Eph. 1:9-10; 2:11-18*). Some scholars think Paul had written other letters to the Ephesians, which do not form part of the New Testament.

4. **You can learn my understanding.** (1) "You will know as much of the secret of Christ as I know!" (2) "You will see in my actions and my whole life, my understanding of the secret of God's will for the Gentiles!"

Christ.) ⁵In past times men were not told this secret, but God has revealed it now by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. ⁶The secret is this: by means of the gospel the Gentiles have a part with the Jews in God's blessings; they are members of the same body, and share in the promise that God made in Christ Jesus.

⁷I was made a servant of the gospel by God's special gift, which he gave me through the working of his power. ⁸I am less than the least of all God's people; yet God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News of the infinite riches of Christ, ⁹and to make all men see how God's secret plan is to be put into effect. God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages, ¹⁰in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might know God's wisdom, in

Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone my administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in

5. **In past times.** "God did make his promise to Abraham, but no one ever thought God would save the Gentiles through their faith in Christ. In fact, in times past, no one knew just how God would make his promise come true! But now that God has acted in Christ, the Spirit revealed the Plan to God's holy apostles and prophets (*John 14:26; 1 Cor. 12:8 and notes*)."

6. **The secret is this.** "The Gentiles share directly with the Jews in the heavenly inheritance. This means: they are now members of the same body, the church, through faith in Christ; they share in the promise (*Gal. 3:17-18*) that God made in Christ Jesus."

7. **I was made.** "At a specific time and place, Christ appeared to me to make me an apostle, and this was God's special gift to me."

8. **I am less.** Some think Paul never really got over the fact that he had tried to destroy the messianic community! Yet, it is equally clear that Paul knew God had forgiven him for this (*1 Tim. 1:12-13*)! It is probable that Paul's enemies kept bringing this up to try to discredit him, and that he takes their accusation and uses it to prove the reality of his commission to be an apostle.

9. **And to make all men see.** In contrast to the mystery religions which claimed to reveal secrets to the privileged few, Paul states that his mission is to tell *all men!* God's secret plan, is put into effect by God's offer to save men through Christ by faith!!!

10. **In order that.** "God kept his secret hidden during the past ages, and even the angelic rulers and powers did not understand what He had planned. Now, at this present time, the fullness of God's wisdom is revealed! The church (messianic community) plays a vital part in God's Plan, since it is by means of the church that we are able to identify God's unchanging Plan at work in history. The continual growth of Christ's church points forward to the climax which is still future (*Eph. 1:10*).

all its different forms. ¹¹God did this according to his eternal purpose, which he achieved through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In union with him, and through our faith in him, we have the freedom to enter into God's presence with all confidence. ¹³I beg you, then, do not be discouraged because I am suffering for you; it is all for your benefit.

The Love of Christ

¹⁴For this reason, then, I fall on my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. ¹⁶I ask God, from the wealth of his glory, to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, ¹⁷and that Christ will make his home in your hearts, through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundations in love,

the heavenly realms, accord- 11
ing to his eternal purpose 12
which he accomplished in 13
Christ Jesus our Lord. In 14
him and through faith in 15
him we may approach God 16
with freedom and confi-
dence. I ask you, therefore, 17
not to be discouraged be-
cause of my sufferings for
you, which are your glory.

A Prayer for the Ephesians

For this reason I kneel be- 14
fore the Father, from whom 15
the whole family of believers
in heaven and on earth de-
rives its name. I pray that 16
out of his glorious riches he
may strengthen you with
power through his Spirit in
your inner being, so that 17
Christ may dwell in your
hearts through faith. And I
pray that you, being rooted

11. **Which he achieved.** "God's Plan, which becomes visible in the church, is not some whim of God, but the result of God's eternal purpose. God's great saving power in all of history is focused in and through Jesus Christ and his church!!!"

12. **The freedom to enter into.** *Johnson* says: "In Jesus Christ, all, both Jew and Gentile alike, can come boldly [with confidence] to God. Without the revelation of Christ [The Faith] we could hardly know of God as a God of love, who loved to have us come to him."

13. **Do not be discouraged.** "I have given you good reasons why you should not be discouraged by my suffering for you. I have showed you God's secret which has been revealed in Jesus Christ, and I have showed you that God accepts you Gentiles directly, without first becoming Jews. My suffering really proves the truth of the Good News I have preached to you!"

14. **For this reason.** "Because of the great privileges God offers to all of us including you Gentiles, and because I do not want you to be discouraged by the things I am suffering, I fall on my knees before the Father in prayer for you all!" [Early Christians sometimes kneeled in prayer, but usually stood, with arms outstretched and hands palm upward, with their eyes raised to the sky.]

15. **Receives its true name.** *Johnson* says "The idea is that The Father is the *Father* of all the families of his children, whether Jews or Gentiles on earth, or in heaven." *MacKnight* thinks this includes the good angels.

16. **I ask God.** "My prayer to God for you is: that out of the wealth of his glory, he would give you power (compare *Acts 4:31*) through his Spirit who lives in you (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*), to be strong in your inner selves as you see God's promises to you and that you will have the courage to hold firmly to these things!!!"

17. **And that Christ.** "And that Christ, who bought you for God by his death and made these promises of God available to you, will make his home in your hearts! Faith is the means by which he does this." **Your roots and foundations.** "Your very *life and growth* has its roots in love, and love is the mortar that builds you *living stones* (*1 Pet. 2:5*) into God's Temple (*Eph. 2:22*) on the foundation which is Jesus Christ!" See *verse 19*.

¹⁸so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long and high and deep is Christ's love.

¹⁹Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the perfect fullness of God.

²⁰To him who is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of, by means of the power working in us: ²¹to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, for all time, forever and ever! Amen.

The Unity of the Body

4 I urge you, then—I who am a prisoner because I serve the Lord: live a life that measures up to the standard God set when he called you. ²Be humble, gentle, and patient always. Show your love by being helpful to one

and established in love, may ¹⁸ have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that ¹⁹ surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to ²⁰ do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be ²¹ glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

18. The power to understand. "Unless your roots and foundations are in *love*, you will never really be able to understand the far reaching effects of Christ's love!!! Love led him to the Cross and love caused him to build his *church* (Matt. 16:18), which not being limited to Jerusalem, covers the whole earth and reaches to heaven itself!!! Christ's *church* is large enough to contain *all* the believers of *all* the nations; and it is so firmly built that it can never be destroyed, but will extend into Eternity!!!"

19. Yes, may you. "I want you to come to know Christ's love, on which his church is built. You can know it, although it is true that in this world we can only know in part the infinite love of Christ! I want you to be filled with God's grace and power to the fullest extent, and love is vital to this!!!"

20-21. To him. "And now to him who is able to make both we Jews and you Gentiles participate and share in all his promises, and to do so much more than we can ever ask for or even think of, both now and in Eternity, by means of the power working in us (Eph. 1:10, 19; Col. 1:29; Phil. 2:13): to God who is able and willing to do all this for us, be glory in the church as the body of Christ, and in Christ Jesus through whom God focused his great saving power, for all time, forever and ever! Amen." It may be that Paul views the *everlasting future* as one long AGE which began at the Empty Tomb which climaxed Christ's First Coming and which extends into the limitless Eternity!!!

1. I urge you, then. "I have showed you the secret Plan of God and the glory of Christ and his church to make you aware of *who you are!!!* What I am about to say is based on the fact of *who you are* in Christ!!!" **A prisoner because.** "I am a prisoner because I serve the Lord. My Jewish enemies have put me here because I insist on telling God's Good News to you Gentiles without forcing you to submit to The Law." **Live a life.** "As sons and daughters of God, you have been called to the highest standards and privileges with which man has ever been honored!!!"

2. Be. "Christian ethics call you to be humble, generous, and patient always! Show that your love is real by being helpful to one another in the problems and sorrows of life."

another. ³Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives, by the peace that binds you together. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you. ⁵There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶there is one God and Father of all men, who is Lord of all, works, through all, and is in all.

⁷Each one of us has been given a special gift, in proportion to what Christ has given. ⁸As the scripture says,

“When he went up to the very heights
he took many captives with him;
he gave gifts to men.”

Make every effort to keep 3
the unity of the Spirit
through the bond of peace.
There is one body and one 4
Spirit—just as you were call-
ed to one hope when you
were called—one Lord, one 5
faith, one baptism; one God 6
and Father of all, who is
over all and through all and
in all.

But to each one of us 7
grace has been given as
Christ apportioned it. This 8
is why it says:

“When he ascended on
high,
he led captives in his
train
and gave gifts to men.”

3. **Do your best.** “As Christians you all have unity in the *one Spirit* (*1 Cor. 12:13*), and by the peace which grows out of love and that binds you together, do your best to preserve this unity!!!” Compare *Col. 3:14*.

4. **There is one body.** Not *one kind of body*, but **ONE BODY** composed of every one who is **IN FACT** a son or daughter of God! Even though each congregation is *the body of Christ* (see note on *Eph. 2:22*), and Christ is the head of each congregation in that sense, yet Christ is the head of the **ONE BODY** into which he unites both Jew and Gentile and brings them back to God (*Eph. 2:16*). **One Spirit.** See note on *verse 3*. *Lipscomb* says: “There is but one Spirit to give life, to guide, and direct that one body.” **One hope.** The hope of eternal life created in each one who hears God’s call (through the gospel, *John 6:45*) and responds to it!

5. **One Lord.** Jesus Christ (*Acts 2:36*), who by his bloody-death bought men for God and is head of the church which he built (*Matt. 16:18*). **One faith.** One living, life-giving confident trust which centers in *God’s finished work in Christ*. Our *creed* is Christ!!! **One baptism.** The *one baptism* which combines water and the Spirit is the promise made to God from a good conscience (*1 Pet. 3:21*). *Lipscomb* says: “One burial [in the liquid grave] of him whose heart is purified by faith, who has been crucified with Jesus Christ to sin, that he may rise [from that liquid grave] to walk in newness of life with the risen and glorified Savior.”

6. **One God and Father.** Not many “gods,” but **ONE God** for all men, both Jew and Gentile, whom the Spirit gives the right to call Father (*Rom. 8:15*). **Who is Lord of all.** See *1 Cor. 15:28*. **Works through all.** *MacKnight* views this in the sense of *Rom. 8:28*. **Is in all.** See *Acts 17:28*. The whole point of this verse is: *what God is to the Christian!*

7. **Each one of us.** “In addition to the gifts which I have just mentioned, which each and every Christian receives, I now mention the special gifts which Christ has for us individually. Each receives what Christ has to give them, in proportion to what Christ himself has given, some more and some less, but each from the same Hand and for the same purpose!” Christians are all equal in promises and privileges, but they are not equal in abilities and responsibilities. See *Luke 19:11-27* and notes.

8. **As the scripture says.** *Psalm 68:18* Septuagint. “When Christ went up to the very heights of heaven itself, he took many captives with him (the evil spirits and powers who had made slaves of men by using sin, the curse of The Law, and the fear of death); and he gave spiritual gifts to all men, both Jew and Gentile!”

9 Now, what does "he went up" mean? It means that first he came down—that is, down to the lower depths of the earth. 10 So he who came down is the same one who went up above and beyond the heavens, to fill the whole universe with his presence. 11 It was he who "gave gifts to men"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. 12 He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, to build up the body of Christ. 13 And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God;

(What does "he ascended" 9 mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended 10 is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave 11 some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare 12 God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in 13 the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and

9. Now? "Because the Jews deny that Jesus is The Christ because of his shame and death, I show you that 'he went up' can have no other meaning but that he first came down to earth from heaven. This must be true, if the one who *went up* is divine, as the Psalm shows!" [Lower depth of the earth = the lower (in relation to heaven) earthly regions. If Paul had meant *the world of the dead*, he would have said it differently. The point-of-view is the *identity* of the one who *came down, went up, and gave gifts to men.*]

10. **So he.** God's throne is said to be above the heavens, since God is *above* all! As Christ sits at God's right side, he has been raised above all! Paul declares that all the gifts working in the church at Ephesus, whether normal or supernormal, have their origin in the Christ who went up to heaven!

11. **It was he who.** Paul identifies the *gifts* as specific services performed in the body of Christ. **Apostles.** If we take this in the strict sense, it means the Twelve and Paul. Their work was complete and not one can or did take their place. They belong to the *first generation* of the church. **Prophets.** These also belonged to the *first generation*. They preached the Good News (God's message) which they were taught directly by the Holy Spirit. Agabus, Judas, Silas, the four daughters of Philip, are mentioned as having this gift. **Evangelists.** It is unfortunate that many think only of *evangelists* in terms of "revivals." The evangelist in the first century of the church was what we call a preacher, but with a little difference in the *job description*. The evangelist did much the same work as the apostles and prophets, but was not *inspired* (although he might have one or more gifts), and did not have the same authority. The mission of the evangelist is to preach the Good News (2 Tim. 4:1-5), to *water* (1 Cor. 3:5-9), to train other workers (2 Tim. 2:1-2), to put things in order (Titus 1:5), and in general to teach the true meaning of the Good News (Titus ch 2). **Pastors** = shepherds, bishops, church elders, church leaders. In the early church, all these titles described the same men. These spiritually mature men, called by the congregation to supervise the spiritual life of the group, and to assist each member to fulfill his or her service to Christ. **Teachers.** Every pastor is a teacher, but not every teacher is a pastor. The church is *on-the-job training* for Eternity!!!

12. **To prepare all God's people.** Christ gave the *gifts* mentioned in *verse 11* to prepare the believing Jews and Gentiles, who are God's people, for the ordinary work of Christian service (both telling others the Good News, Acts 8:4; and benevolence), to build up the body of Christ (in spiritual strength and in numbers).

13. **And so.** The *work* of the leadership is to bring each Christian, man or woman, to the highest degree of spiritual maturity possible! By doing this, Christians come to a *oneness* in faith and knowledge of Christ. Lack of *oneness* implies spiritual immaturity. **Of Christ's full stature.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The *CHRISTOU* is the *poss. gen.*, and the phrase means the fullness that belongs to Christ, the sum of the qualities which make Him what He is. These are to be *imaged* in the Church (compare Eph. 1:23), and when these are in us we shall have reached our maturity and attained to the goal set before us." This must be the aim of all our *teaching* and all our *living*!!!

we shall become mature men, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature. ¹⁴Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful men, who lead others to error by the tricks they invent. ¹⁵Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶Under his control all the different parts of the body fit together, and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love.

The New Life in Christ

¹⁷In the Lord's name, then, I say this and warn you: do not live any longer like the heathen, whose thoughts are worthless, ¹⁸and whose minds are in the dark. They have no part in the life that God gives, because they are completely ig-

become mature, attaining the full measure of perfection found in Christ.

Then we will no longer be ¹⁴infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking ¹⁵the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole ¹⁶body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Living as Children of Light

So I tell you this, and ¹⁷insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They ¹⁸are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their

14. **No longer be children.** Children are weak, inexperienced, easily fooled. God has purposely set up this world as an *obstacle course!* We reach our *eternal goal* only by using all of God's help to avoid the mudholes, the barbed-wire, the barriers, and everything else the Devil puts in our way to send us off in the wrong direction!!!

15. **Instead.** "Rather than being children, we must grow up to Christ's full stature!" Truth spoken without love can destroy the one who uses it! See *Rev. 2:4-5* and notes. But truth spoken in love will bless both the one who speaks and the one who hears!!!

16. **Under his control.** "As the *head*, Christ controls his body. Under his control, all the different parts of the body (Jew and Gentile, slave and free, man and woman) fit together in a synergetic community where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The health and growth of the whole body depends upon the functioning of each and every member!

17. **In the Lord's name, then.** "This is the Lord's command I speak to you! Do not live any longer like the heathen do! They live lives that are morally and intellectually futile! Do not be fooled by their mysteries and secrets, which they call *true wisdom!*" **Worthless.** "They waste their mental powers on things that have no value at all!"

18. **In the dark.** "They are ignorant of truth and do not know they are ignorant!!!" **In the life that God gives.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "This cannot mean the *godly life*, the way of life approved by God. For *ζωή* in the NT seems never to mean the *course* of life, but *life* itself, the principle of life as opposed to *death.*" See *Rom. 1:21-23*. **Because.** The fact that they have no part in the life God gives is due to their own choice! The cause is not something external, but in *themselves!*

norant and stubborn. ¹⁹They have lost all feeling of shame; they give themselves over to vice, and do all sorts of indecent things without restraint.

²⁰That was not what you learned about Christ!

²¹You certainly heard about him, and as his followers you were taught the truth that is in Jesus. ²²So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. ²³Your hearts and minds must be made completely new.

²⁴You must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness, and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.

²⁵No more lying then! Everyone must tell the truth to his brother, because we are all members together in the body of Christ. ²⁶If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin;

hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are

19. **They have lost.** "They are no longer able to feel shame or guilt at the things they do!" **They give themselves.** See *Rom. 1:24-32*.

20. **Not what you learned.** The message of the Good News included the command: *You must be holy, because I am holy (1 Pet. 1:16)*.

21. **You certainly heard.** Paul links Christ with the *shape* of moral life! **And as his followers.** See note on *verse 13*. Jesus refers to the *Christ of history*, through whom God spoke (*Heb. 1:2*), and whose words form the message of the Good News (*John 14:26; Acts 1:1-2*).

22. **So get rid of.** "Because you are new in Christ, your life must be a series of deliberate choices in which you get rid of your old self (*Rom. 8:12-13*) to live new in the Spirit! *The life style* of the Christian must *match up* with his or her new relationship with Christ!!

23. **Completely new.** "You made a promise to God in your baptism (*1 Pet. 3:21*), and you must change your whole way of thinking, with God's help (*Rom. 12:1-2*)." *Becoming holy* = taking *being put right with God* seriously!!!

24. **You must put on.** Note this is said to those who are already Christians!!! *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "... but as 'the holy form of human life which results from redemption,' created once for all in and by Christ, and participated in by the individual convert." We do become *new* in our new birth (*Titus 3:5*) and for this reason we put off the *old man* and put on the *new man* as our love for Christ motivates us to live in imitation of Him.

25. **No more lying then!** Lying was *standard practice* in the Gentile world. **Because.** "I want you to see the union we have with each other through our union with Christ! This is the reason you must tell the truth to your brother! Being part of the body of Christ means that your whole life is shared with your brothers and sisters in Christ!"

26. **Do not let.** "Anger can lead you into sin, if it is not controlled!" [Paul quotes *Psalms 4:4* Septuagint.] **Do not stay angry.** "Do not let your anger turn into a grudge and make you hostile!"

and do not stay angry all day. ²⁷Don't give the Devil a chance. ²⁸The man who used to rob must stop robbing and start working, to earn an honest living for himself, and to be able to help the poor. ²⁹Do not use harmful words in talking. Use only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you. ³⁰And do not make God's Holy Spirit sad; for the Spirit is God's mark of ownership on you, a guarantee that the Day will come when God will set you free. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults. No more hateful feelings of any sort. ³²Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you in Christ.

Living in the Light

5 Since you are God's dear children, you must try to be like him. ²Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us, as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice that pleases God.

still angry, and do not give ²⁷the devil a foothold. He who ²⁸has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the ³⁰Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get ³¹rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

5 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

27. **Don't give the Devil.** "Uncontrolled anger and violent temper give the Devil a chance to tempt you into evil actions!" [Erasmus translated this: "Give no chance to heathen to say bad things about the holy religion which you profess."]

28. **Who used to rob.** Here is a strong statement of the *Christian work ethic*. Honest work is the best antidote to a dishonest life! But notice the emphasis on *to be able to help the poor!!!*

29. **Do not use harmful words.** Christians must work to build, not to destroy! Compare *James 3:5-12*.

30. **And do not make.** "If you use harmful words and live unholy lives, you will make God's Holy Spirit sad, and deprive yourself of His help!" **God's mark of ownership.** This mark of ownership was placed on them in the new birth of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*). A **guarantee**. We expect to be completely set free in the Resurrection (*Rom. 8:23; 1 John 3:1-3*).

31. **Get rid of.** "All these things make the Spirit sad!"

32. **Instead.** Christian love is: acting toward others as God has acted toward you! These are positive qualities that the Spirit leads you to develop (as the written word teaches you)! Compare *verse 3; Gal. 5:22-26*. [Contrast this with the Gentile philosopher Epictetus, who said: "If one is in affliction, thou may say to him, Thou hast pity on him, but take care not to feel any pity."]

1. **Since you are.** "Do not imitate the viciously immoral character of the heathen gods! You are God's dear children and you must try to imitate his perfect character, especially his forgiving love!"

2. **Controlled by love.** "The greatest *expression* of God's love is his act in Christ to set us free! Christ himself loved us and voluntarily gave his life for us (*John 10:17-18*)! Christ is our sin-offering, to change us from enemies to friends of God! This is the example of love which your life should imitate!"

³Since you are God's people, it is not right that any questions of immorality, or indecency, or greed should even be mentioned among you. ⁴Nor is it fitting for you to use obscene, foolish, or dirty words. Rather you should give thanks to God. ⁵You may be sure of this: no man who is immoral, indecent, or greedy (for greediness is a form of idol worship) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

⁶Do not let anyone deceive you with foolish words; it is because of these very things that God's wrath will come upon those who do not obey him. ⁷So have nothing at all to do with such people. ⁸You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord's people you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light. ⁹For it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of good-

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure, or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and

3. **God's people.** "As God's holy people, sin is no longer a possible option for you (*1 John 3:9*)!" The Gentiles did not count these things as sin, but these were some of the deadliest temptations to which the Gentile Christians were exposed. They still are!!! See notes on *Gal. 5:19-20*.

4. **For you to use.** "Even the way you talk must show you belong to God!" **Obscene.** Deeply offensive to morality or decency. **Foolish.** Frivolous and senseless. But it may have the sense of *malicious gossip* (see note on *Matt. 12:36*). **Dirty words.** The coarse joking that makes fun of modesty and despises goodness. **Give thanks to God.** This is the antidote to the attitude that uses obscene, foolish, or dirty words. If you spend your life giving thanks to God, you will avoid these sins which are out of place in the life of God's child.

5. **You may be sure of this.** "The message of the Good News teaches you that no man, even a Christian, who is immoral, indecent, or greedy (*verse 3*) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom (*Matt. 7:21-23*)!" **Idol worship.** The greedy man makes money his *idol*.

6. **Do not let.** "Do not let a legislator, a philosopher, a teacher, or a preacher deceive you with foolish words and convince you that these things we say to prohibit immorality, indecency, greed, and evil words are only ritual rules which originate from the Law of Moses! God's wrath is coming on the world for these very things!!!" Compare *Rom. 1:18; Jude 15-16*.

7. **So.** "Do not share in their crimes, or you will share in their punishment!" Compare *1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14* and notes.

8. **Used to be.** "When you were heathens, you used to live in darkness, even though you knew secrets and mysteries. But now you have become the Lord's people and are in the light of *truth*! This places an obligation on you to make your *life style* holy!" In the Dead Sea Scrolls, *light and darkness* are locked in struggle during this entire age. The Good News shows that the *crisis* was reached when Christ came into the world (*John 1:5*); and that the darkness is passing away, and the real light is already shining (*1 John 2:8*). The darkness has already *lost*! See *John 12:31* and note.

9. **That brings a rich harvest.** The pagan mystery religions stressed *ecstatic experience* as a fruit or harvest of their version of *light*. Paul makes it plain that the true harvest which *light* brings is a transformed life style! Compare *Col. 1:10; Gal. 5:22-23*.

ness, righteousness, and truth. ¹⁰Try to learn what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, that belong to the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light. ¹²(It is really too shameful even to talk about the things they do in secret.) ¹³And when all things are brought out to the light, then their true nature is clearly revealed; ¹⁴for anything that is clearly revealed becomes light. That is why it is said,

“Wake up sleeper,
and rise from the dead!
And Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵So pay close attention to how you live. Don't live like ignorant men, but like wise men. ¹⁶Make good use of every opportunity you get, because these are bad days. ¹⁷Don't be fools, then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do.

(truth) and find out what 10
pleases the Lord. Have noth- 11
ing to do with the fruitless
deeds of darkness, but
rather expose them. For it 12
is shameful even to mention
what is done in secret. But 13
everything exposed by the
light becomes visible, for it 14
is light that makes every-
thing visible. This is why it is
said:

“Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on
you.”

Be very careful, then, how 15
you live—not as unwise but
as wise, making the most of 16
every opportunity, because
the days are evil. Therefore 17
do not be foolish, but under-
stand what the Lord's will is.

10. **What pleases the Lord.** “Your life is a living sacrifice in praise to God! So you must learn what the Lord expects from you!”

11. **Have nothing to do.** “Have no part in the worthless things that people do in secret, things that belong to the darkness! Bring everything out into the light of truth and expose evil for what it is!”

12. **Even to talk.** Those initiated into the mystery religions were not allowed to reveal the secrets and mysteries. Paul is saying that this certainly is best, since they are really too horrible to even talk about!

13. **Then their true nature.** “The light of the Good News clearly shows up the true nature of things: If the light, so called, of the mystery religions was true, it would show up their sins for what they really are!”

14. **Becomes light.** The TEV gives the literal translation, the NIV the meaning. *Aford* understands this: “The light of your Christian life, which will be by your reproof (censure) shed upon these deeds of darkness, will bring them out of the category of darkness into light.” That is why. Some think this quotation is from an early Christian baptismal hymn. This kind of language was associated with baptism very quickly (compare *Heb. 6:4*). Baptism was viewed as the climax of being raised from the dead (spiritually) into the light of Christ (*Col. 2:12*).

15. **To how you live.** “Wise men see the ethical side of truth and pay close attention to their life style. Ignorant men do not, and let themselves be swept away by the forces of evil.”

16. **Make good use.** “The days we live in are so morally corrupt, that you must seize every opportunity you get to do good!” Compare *Col. 4:5-6*; *2 Tim. 4:1-5*.

17. **But try to find out.** A Christian has a new mind and a different set of goals. He or she will carefully evaluate each situation in the *light of Christ*, to find out what the Lord wants done. Compare *1 Cor. 2:13-15*.

¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, which will only ruin you; instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another in the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord, with praise in your hearts. ²⁰Always give thanks for everything to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not get drunk on wine, 18 which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another 19 with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving 20 thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²¹Submit yourselves to one another, because of your reverence for Christ.

²²Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For a husband has authority over his wife in the same way that Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself

Wives and Husbands

Submit to one another out 21 of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your 22 husbands as to the Lord. For 23 the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of

18. **Do not get drunk.** "Do not get drunk with wine as the heathens do in their orgies! This will only ruin you, as it gives the Devil a chance to lead you into all kinds of sins!" **Be filled with the Spirit.** Compare *John 7:37-39*. The wild rites of music, dancing, and wine used by the mystery religions will ruin those who participate. Paul shows the contrast of *being filled with the Spirit*, which builds up and incites to holy living!

19. **Speak to one another.** "Instead of singing lewd songs as the heathens do in the worship of their gods, you, in your praise to God and your times of jubilation, must speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." **Psalm.** The Septuagint gave this meaning of: *singing praise to God*. **Hymn.** A general song of praise. **Spiritual songs.** Any song with a spiritual theme. It may be that the Holy Spirit himself was the source of many of these songs (*1 Cor. 14:26*). *Lipscomb* says: "Singing is one means of getting the word of Christ into the hearts of the hearers. By speaking in songs they are to teach and admonish one another, by bringing the thoughts and feelings of the heart into harmony with the sentiment [meaning] of the songs." **Sing hymns and psalms.** A literal translation might be: *hymning and psalming in your heart to the Lord*. The TEV gives the meaning. [Some see in this the vocal music of the synagogue and early church.] See notes on *Col. 3:16*.

20. **Always give thanks.** *Thanksgiving* is a form of praise and is to always be the attitude of the Christian, no matter what the external circumstances might be!! **In the name.** Compare *Col. 3:17* and note.

21. **Submit yourselves.** This is the general rule of Christian community. *Reverence for Christ* is both a motive, and points to the example which Christ himself set for us. Members of the body of Christ have to submit themselves to the life of the body as a whole, and to the direction of the *head*, who is Christ Jesus! Compare *John 17:20-21*.

22. **Wives.** This submitting does not imply any inferiority, but rather a mutual sharing. This attitude on the part of the wife grows out of her reverence for Christ.

23. **Has authority.** Note Paul says the Christ-church relationship sets the standard for the husband-wife relationship. Wives must submit to the authority of the husbands; husbands must love the wives. **The Savior.** In this Paul stresses the difference to strengthen the truth of what he is teaching. See next verse.

the Savior of the church, his body. ²⁴And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands, in the same way that the church submits itself to Christ.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. ²⁶He did this to dedicate the church to God, by his word, after making it clean by the washing in water, ²⁷in order to present the church to himself, in all its beauty, pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle, or any other imperfection. ²⁸Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹(No one ever hates his own body. Instead, he feeds it and takes care of it, just as Christ does the church; ³⁰for we are members of his

which he is the Savior. Now ²⁴ as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your ²⁵ wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, ²⁶ cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to ²⁷ himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same ²⁸ way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no ²⁹ one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members ³⁰

24. **In the same way.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "Christ indeed is Savior of the body, and that the husband is not; nevertheless the question of *obedience* is not affected thereby; for all that, as the Church is subject to Christ, so too are wives to be subject to their husbands." *Johnson* says: "The relation of the wife to the husband is like that of the church to Christ, a close, tender relation, in which there is no bondage [slavery], but freedom, because the service is that of the heart." Compare *1 Cor. 7:2-5* and notes.

25. **Love your wives.** This modifies the relationship. The word here for love is *AGAPE*. If the wife's duty is submission, the husband's is love - a love like Christ's! This gives Paul an opportunity to point to the great love which Christ had, and in particular, the *loving act* of the Cross!!! Compare *Eph. 1:5; 2:4-5; Rom. 5:8*.

26. **He did this.** This points to the goal of Christ's self-sacrificing love. **To dedicate the church.** The idea is *to make holy, to set apart for holy use.* **By his word.** The promise attached to baptism (*1 Pet. 3:21*) is like a *marriage vow*. The *washing in water* would have no meaning without the authority of his word (see notes on *Acts 2:38*). **After making it clean.** The *aorist verb form* points to the act of baptism by which believers are united with Christ, rather than to continuous Christian growth. *Wesley* says: "In baptism; if, with 'the outward and visible sign,' we receive the 'inward and spiritual grace.'" Compare *Titus 3:5* and note.

27. **In order to present.** "Christ makes the church clean, so that at the Day of Judgment he may present her to himself as a bride who is pure and holy! Compare *Rev. 19:7-9* and notes.

28. **Men ought to love their wives.** Paul intends to stress the close relationship between Christ and his church. In marriage, the husband and wife become one (*Matt. 19:5*). This love is more than a duty, it is a *natural* thing!!!

29. **No one ever hates.** "No one in his right mind would hate his own body! Instead he feeds it generously and takes very good care of it, and this is just how Christ treats his church!!! And of course this is how a husband should take care of his wife."

30. **For we are members.** Adam used this language about Eve: "She is bone out of my bones and flesh out of my flesh" (*Gen. 2:23 Zamenhof*). We are *in fact* parts of *that body* of which Christ is *the head*!!!

body.) ³¹As the scripture says, "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother, and unite with his wife, and the two will become one."
³²There is a great truth revealed in this scripture, and I understand it applies to Christ and the church. ³³But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.

of his body. "For this reason ³¹ a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This ³² is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, ³³ each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

Children and Parents

6 Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do. ²"Honor your father and mother" is the first commandment that has a promise added: ³so that all may be well with you, and you may live a long time in the land."

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

⁴Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, raise them with Christian discipline and instruction.

Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

31. **As the scripture says.** *Gen. 2:24.* This quotation points to a separation from others, and to a permanent union! It also implies that Christ left his home with the Father for the sake of his *spiritual Bride!*

32. **A great truth revealed.** To Paul, a mystery is something once hidden but now revealed. The TEV gives the correct meaning. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The truth of which I have spoken, the relation of husband and wife as one flesh, is a revelation of profound importance; but let me explain that, in speaking of it as I have done, my meaning is to direct your minds to that higher relation between Christ and His Church, in its likeness to which lies its deepest significance."

33. **But it also.** "This has very practical meaning for you also." **Every husband.** "Every husband must love his wife as he loves his own body!" **Every wife.** "Every wife must respect her husband because of her reverence for Christ!" [There may be special meaning in the fact that Paul tells the husband to *love*, and the wife to *respect*.]

1. **Children.** "Obey even your unbelieving parents in everything compatible with your duty to the Lord. It is your Christian duty to do this, because of your reverence for Christ."

2. **Honor.** "It is your *duty* to obey; *honor* is the attitude that motivates you to obey." The quotation is *Deut. 5:16*.

3. **So that.** "God added this promise to the commandment. To honor your parents still brings a blessing!" Disobedience to parents grows out of failing to honor them, and Paul sees this as one sign of being estranged from God (*Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2*).

4. **Parents.** "Do not make your children bitter and hostile by your harsh and unreasonable treatment of them! (See *Col. 3:21*) Be gentle in your punishment and teach them in love, because of your reverence for Christ!"

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your human masters, with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ. ⁶Do this not only when they are watching you, to gain their approval; but with all your heart do what God wants, as slaves of Christ. ⁷Do your work as slaves cheerfully, then, as though you served the Lord, and not merely men. ⁸Remember that the Lord will reward every man, whether slave or free, for the good work he does.

⁹Masters, behave in the same way toward your slaves; and stop using threats. Remember that you and your slaves belong to the same Master in heaven, who judges everyone by the same standard.

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord, and by means of his mighty power. ¹¹Put on all the armor that God gives you, so that you will stand up against the Devil's evil tricks.

Slaves and Masters

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

And master, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

The Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the

5. **Slaves.** "Since the Good News does not cancel the social structure which you are part of, I tell you who are slaves to obey your human masters, with fear and trembling rather than with pride and arrogance! And do it with a sincere heart, motivated by love and your reverence for Christ!" Compare *1 Cor. 7:21-22* and notes.

6. **Do this.** "The point of your obedience to your human masters, is not just to make them think you are a good servant; but you are to do this because of your reverence for Christ!" See *Col. 3:22*.

7. **Cheerfully.** "You must not misunderstand your freedom in Christ! You must view yourselves, not as slaves to men, but as servants of Christ! You must not be rebellious, but serve cheerfully, because in serving them faithfully, you are serving Him!" Christian love causes us to *relate* with others *through* our reverence for Christ.

8. **Remember.** "Remember what the Good News teaches you! Whether you are rewarded in this world for your good work or not, the Lord will reward every man (*Rev. 22:12*)! Whether slave or free, your attitude should be based on this fact!"

9. **Masters.** "Like parents, masters have obligations as well as rights. Let your reverence for Christ guide you in your behavior toward your slaves. Remember that all of you have been bought with a price (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*) and that your Master will judge both you and your slaves by the same standard!" See *Introduction to Philemon*.

10. **Build up your strength.** "Finally, to show you how important it is for you to pay close attention to the *ethical life style* you follow, I show you this picture of what we are actually doing!"

11. **Put on all the armor.** Paul uses the symbolism of a Roman soldier getting ready to go into battle. Armor protects against the weapons of the enemy. **The Devil's evil tricks.** This shows that the battle is actually religious/moral (since the two cannot be separated).

¹²For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. ¹³So take up God's armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks, and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

¹⁴So stand ready: have truth for a belt tight around your waist; put on righteousness for your breastplate, ¹⁵and the readiness to announce the Good News of peace as shoes for your feet. ¹⁶At all times carry faith as a shield; with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by

devil's schemes. For our 12
struggle is not against flesh
and blood, but against the
rulers, against the authori-
ties, against the powers of
this dark world and against
the spiritual forces of evil in
the heavenly realms. There- 13
fore put on the full armor of
God, so that when the day of
evil comes, you may be able
to stand your ground, and
after you have done every-
thing, to stand. Stand firm 14
then, with the belt of truth
buckled around your waist,
with the breastplate of right-
eousness in place, and with 15
your feet fitted with the
gospel of peace as a firm
footing. In addition to all 16
this, take up the shield of
faith, with which you can ex-
tinguish all the flaming

12. **For we are not.** Paul shows us another of God's secrets. The evil angels fight against men and continually try to tempt them into sin! "Our real battle is not against the idolatrous rulers and other evil men of this present age (we want to bring them to Christ and save them). Our real battle is against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world!" Compare *Eph. 1:21; 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4* and notes. These facts which Paul gives us, take the day-to-day struggle to live holy lives out of the realm of *make-believe!* It is a life-and-death struggle with supernatural forces who are the agents of the one Devil!!! Compare introductory note to *Rev. 13:1*.

13. **So take up!** "God has given you defensive armor against the wicked spiritual powers, but you must put it on!!! Then when the evil day of temptation comes, you will be able to resist the attack of these evil powers, and when they have done their worst to destroy you, you will still hold your ground!!!!"

14. **So stand ready.** Being able to stand ready involves the soldier's own act of preparation. "The spiritual soldier who still holds his ground, must again stand ready to face another such crucial battle, should it come! I show you what you must do before you take your stand." **Truth for a belt.** The soldier's belt anchored and held together other parts of his armor. Since the word of God is the sword, truth here probably means *frankness and sincerity* (*2 Cor. 1:12*). **Righteousness.** A breastplate protected the chest area from injury. Righteousness is *integrity in personal conduct*. This is vital to Christian life (*Rom. 6:13*).

15. **And the readiness.** This means: (1) active preparation; (2) preparedness. [This can be translated as the NIV has done, but Johnson, MacKnight, et. al., understand it as the TEV has done.] It is the *readiness to announce* that forms the shoes. This includes such things as: courage, self-discipline, endurance, and a kind and gentle spirit. The *peace* of God's finished work in Christ is made real in the church now, and will in the future include all the universe (*Col. 1:20*).

16. **Faith as a shield.** Johnson says: "The Roman oblong shield, four and a half feet long, covered the whole body and was a protection in itself." *Faith* is: the firm belief of the teachings and promises of the Good News, which actively holds firmly to these things. **Burning arrows.** This is a literal translation. These were used in much the same way as a fire-bomb. Since our faith is based on God's act in Christ, a historical action **EXTRINSIC** to ourselves, we have the Christian confidence which will extinguish the burning arrows of doubt, fear, defeatism, etc. Compare *1 John 3:19-21*.

the Evil One. ¹⁷And accept salvation for a helmet, and the word of God as the sword that the Spirit gives you. ¹⁸Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people. ¹⁹And pray also for me, that God will give me a message, when I am ready to speak, that I may speak boldly and make known the gospel's secret. ²⁰For the sake of this gospel I am an ambassador, though now I am in prison. Pray that I may be bold in speaking of it, as I should.

Final Greetings

²¹Tychicus, our dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord's work, will give you all the news about me, so that you may know how I am getting along. ²²That is why I am sending him to you—to tell you how all of us are getting along, and so bring courage to your hearts.

arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Pray also for me, that I whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Final Greetings

Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

17. **Salvation.** *MacKnight* understands this to protect the Christian from the fear of death. **Word of God.** This is the sword that the Spirit gives the Christian to use to defeat the forces of evil. The Spirit conquers through the individual Christian. See also *Heb. 4:12* and note.

18. **Do all this.** "As soldiers identify each other by means of pass-words, let your identification as soldiers of Christ be your prayer in Jesus' name! Be sure to ask for God's help as you face the battles of the day! **As the Spirit leads.** Compare *Rom 8:26; Eph. 2:22; Jude 20; Gal. 4:6* and notes. **For this reason.** Because we are fighting against wicked spiritual forces. **For all God's people.** Only when we constantly pray for *others* in this way, can we pray for ourselves!

19. **Also for me.** Paul often asks this. The context shows he, even in prison, may have the wisdom and the boldness to speak the secret of the gospel in an effective way. Compare *Luke 21:12-13; 2 Tim. 4:17*.

20. **For the sake of this gospel.** *Johnson* says: "As an ambassador is sent to a foreign court to declare the will of the king, so he, though in chains, was Christ's ambassador sent to Rome to declare the will of his King."

21. **Tychicus.** He probably delivered this Letter, and could give them a report on Paul's condition. Tychicus was a native of the Province of Asia (*Acts 20:4*), possibly of Ephesus itself. He was a close associate to Paul, and it is probable that he went to Jerusalem with him, as Trophimus did (*Acts 21:29*), as a "delegate of the church."

22. **That is why.** "I am sending this faithful brother to you to tell you about my condition, and to give you comfort and strength!"

²³May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give peace and love to all the brothers, with faith. ²⁴May God's grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with undying love.

Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. ²³
²⁴

23-24. **May God.** "I give you my benediction and blessing, to the church at Ephesus and to all the others who read this!" This Letter was certainly intended for all the churches in Asia.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

How do you account for the sin, evil, and misery that is in the world??? Earth would be a wilderness, if it were not cultivated with great care! It grows weeds and poisonous plants as it is, and natural disasters destroy crops and take lives! Many of the human race are wicked to excess, and their evil brings misery and suffering upon themselves and others. Besides all this, mankind is subject to a variety of painful diseases and to death!

Many theories have been invented to account for this. Some have said that this universe was created by an *evil god*, who fights against the true God. Some have said humans are being punished here for sins done in a previous life. Some have said that there is no reason and no sense to any of it, and that it has always been just like it is with no change at all. The Epicureans taught a theory much like modern *evolution*.

But into this darkness has come the light of Christ! There is but one first Cause, who is both infinitely powerful and infinitely good!!! Every being in the universe derive their existence from Him, absolutely depend upon Him, and are under His rule!!! Whatever evil exists, grows out of the freedom of will which God originally gave His rational creatures, and which made them moral, and responsible for their own actions!!! Adam and Eve, our first parents, abused their freedom of will by one act of disobedience, and brought God's curse down upon this earth. You wouldn't have done this??? But you did!!! You came into this world as pure and innocent as Adam, and you abused your free will just as he did.

What is the answer to all this??? You cannot save yourself!!! But what you cannot do, God already did!!! He ACTED in Christ!!! God's purpose for this was to set man free from: (1) the power of sin; (2) the guilt and punishment of sin. God chose to make faith the basis of receiving the

benefits of this finished work in Christ. *MacKnight* says of this action of God: "But that, for remedying these evils, God was graciously pleased, in his original plan, to appoint the mediation of his Son, whereby the penal consequences of sin are so far prevented, that they do not take place in all cases; for as many of mankind as are delivered by him from the power of sin, shall at length be also delivered from its punishment, and be raised to a degree of perfection and happiness, greater than if they never had sinned."

Paul planted this church on his second tour of missions, around 50 A.D. See *Acts ch 16*. It is generally thought that this Letter was written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, between 60-62 A.D.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

1 From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus—

To all God's people living in Philippi who are in union with Christ Jesus, and to the church leaders and helpers:

²May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul's Prayer for His Readers

³I thank my God for you every time I think of you; ⁴and every time I pray for you all, I pray with joy, ⁵because of the way in which you have helped me in the work of the gospel, from the very first day until now. ⁶And so I am sure of this: that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished in the Day of Christ Jesus. ⁷You are always in my heart! And so it is only right for me to feel this way about you. For you have all shared with me in this privilege that God has given me, both now that I am in prison and also while I was free to defend and firmly

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

I thank my God every 3
time I remember you. In all 4
my prayers for all of you, I 5
always pray with joy because 6
of your partnership in the 7
gospel from the first day until 8
now, being confident of 9
this, that he who began a 10
good work in you will carry 11
it on to completion until the 12
day of Christ Jesus.

It is right for me to feel 13
this way about all of you, 14
since I have you in my heart; 15
for whether I am in chains or 16
defending and confirming 17
the gospel, all of you share 18

1. **From Paul and Timothy.** This is more like an ordinary letter. Paul does not assert his apostleship, but gives a friendly greeting from himself and Timothy. Timothy is described in the Introduction to First Timothy. **To all God's people.** Christians are God's people! [*Saints*: see note on 1 Cor. 6:11.] **Church leaders.** Titus 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:1. **Church helpers.** 1 Tim. 3:8.

2. **May God.** See note on Rom. 1:7.

3. **I thank my God.** See note on Rom. 1:8. Paul, imprisoned, has much to thank his God for!!!

4. **I pray with joy.** The faith of these Christians at Philippi made him jubilant!!!

5. **Because of the way.** Paul is probably thinking of the money and gifts which they sent him at different times (*Phil.* 2:25; 4:10, 18). But it goes even deeper than this because they share a common faith in the One Lord!!!

6. **And so.** "I have no doubt about your faith, and I know you will go on to the end!!!" **That God.** God began this work by sending Paul to them. Paul sees God's work in all that is done, but he also sees God and man as partners in the Christian life (*Phil.* 2:12-16; 1 Cor. 3:6).

7. **You are always!** "You are especially dear to me in Christ!!!" **For you.** They all share a common grace in Christ, but Paul probably means the way they shared with him in sending Epaphroditus with gifts to help him while he is imprisoned and cannot work to help himself (*Phil.* 2:25-30; 4:18). They also helped finance his work at other times (*Phil.* 4:15-16).

establish the gospel. ⁸God knows that I tell the truth when I say that my deep feeling for you all comes from the heart of Christ Jesus himself.

⁹This is my prayer for you: I pray that your love will keep on growing more and more, together with true knowledge and perfect judgment, ¹⁰so that you will be able to choose what is best. Then you will be free from all impurity and blame on the Day of Christ. ¹¹Your lives will be filled with the truly good qualities which Jesus Christ alone can produce, for the glory and praise of God.

To Live Is Christ

¹²I want you to know, my brothers, that the things that have happened to me have really helped the progress of the gospel. ¹³As a result, the whole palace guard and all the others here know that I am in prison because I am a servant of Christ. ¹⁴And my being in prison has given most of the brothers more confidence in the Lord, so that they grow bolder all the time in preaching the message without fear.

in God's grace with me. God ⁸
can testify how I long for all
of you with the affection of
Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer: ⁹
that your love may abound
more and more in know-
ledge and depth of insight,
so that you may be able to ¹⁰
discern what is best and may
be pure and blameless until
the day of Christ, filled with ¹¹
the fruit of righteousness
that comes through Jesus
Christ—to the glory and
praise of God.

Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel

Now I want you to know, ¹²
brothers, that what has hap-
pened to me has really ser-
ved to advance the gospel.
As a result, it has become ¹³
clear throughout the whole
palace guard and to every-
one else that I am in chains
for Christ. Because of my ¹⁴
chains, most of the brothers
in the Lord have been en-
couraged to speak the word
of God more courageously
and fearlessly.

8. **God knows.** "As God himself knows, my deep feeling for you is the same as the deep feeling Christ has for you!!!" Compare *Eph. 5:21* and note.

9. **I pray that your love.** "I pray that your love of Christ and your fellow man will continue to grow and grow, as you gain more true knowledge and perfect judgment through your study and practice of God's word!!!"

10. **Able to choose.** "I want you to be able to examine all things in the light of God's truth, so that you can choose what is best (*1 Thess. 5:21-22*)." There was danger from the *circumcision party* who distorted the gospel (see *Acts ch 15*), and it is vitally important that they be able to recognize what is true!! **Then you will be.** Day of Christ = Judgment. The ultimate test of their Christian life is that they are free from all impurity and blame on the Day of Christ!!!

11. **Will be filled.** "And then, like trees of righteousness planted by the Lord, you will be filled with the fruit of righteousness, to the praise of God!!!" Compare *Gal. 5:22-23*.

12. **I want you to know.** "I don't want you to be sad or discouraged because I am now imprisoned and suffering! I want you to see these things in their true light! All this has really helped to spread the gospel of Christ!"

13. **As a result.** "It is common knowledge that I have been imprisoned because of my religion, and this makes people curious!" See note on *Acts 28:16*.

14. **Has given.** "My courage at this time has set an example which has made most of the brothers more confident as they preach the message!!!" See *Phil. 4:22* and note for some of the results of this.

¹⁵Of course some of them preach Christ because they are jealous and quarrelsome, but others preach him with all good will. ¹⁶These do so from love, because they know that God has given me the work of defending the gospel. ¹⁷The others do not proclaim Christ sincerely, but from a spirit of selfish ambition; they think that they will make more trouble for me while I am in prison.

¹⁸It does not matter! I am happy about it—just so Christ is preached in every way possible, whether from wrong or right motives. And I will

It is true that some preach 15 Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. The latter do so in love, 16 knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ 17 out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But 18 what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to

15. **Of course some.** How do we fit this in with our *idea* of the early church??? The truth is, of course, that the early church faced every problem that the church is facing today!!! Technology does not change the basic problems, which grow out of human relationships. *Robert Rainy* says: "Mixture of motive has haunted the work even of those who strove to keep their motives pure. And men in whom lower motive and worse motive had a strong influence have struck into the work alongside of the nobler and purer laborers. So it has pleased God to permit; that even in this sacred field men might be tried and manifested before the judgment of the great day; and that it might be more plain that the effectual blessing and the true increase come from Himself." See *verse 17*.

16. **These do so from love.** Those who preach Christ with all good will. These viewed Paul's imprisonment in the light of truth - as a defence of the gospel!!!

17. **The others.** *Robert Rainy* says: "There were, as we all know, in the Church of those days powerful sections of professed believers, who contested Paul's apostleship, questioned his teaching, and wholly disliked the effects of his work. Perhaps by this time the strain of that conflict had become a little less severe, but it had not wholly passed away. We call these persons the Judaizers [circumcision party]. They were men who looked to Jesus Christ as the Messiah, who owned the authority of His teaching, and claimed an interest in His promises. But they insisted on linking Christianity to Jewish forms, and rules, and conditions of law-keeping, which were on various grounds dear and sacred to them . . . Possibly there might even be a Christian congregation in the city in which this type prevailed." Compare *Acts 21:20; John 19:15* and notes. They probably preached Christ as *king*, hoping to *stir up* the Roman authorities against Paul.

18. **It does not matter!** *Robert Rainy* says: "It is not true that the preaching of Christ serves no purpose and yields no fruits, in cases where it is not carried on in the right or the best spirit . . . Now the Apostle, looking at this, is glad of it. He is not glad that any men, professing Christ, give way to evil and unchristian tempers. But he is glad that Christ is preached. There were cases in which he vehemently contended with such persons - when they strove to poison and pervert Christians who had learned the better way. But now he is thinking of the outside world; and it was good that the making known of Christ should gather strength, and volume, and extension. And the Apostle knew that the Lord could bless His own message, imperfectly delivered perhaps, to bring thirsty souls to Himself, and would not fail in His unsearchable wisdom to care for those who came, and to lead them in the ways He thought best. Let Christ be preached. The converts do not belong to the denominations, but first of all to Christ. Neither is it appointed that the denominations shall permanently hold those whom they bring in; but Christ can hold them, and can order their future in ways we cannot foretell. . . . But God is not tied up to give *no success* to men acting under wrong motives: at least, if we are not to say He gives the success to them, yet in connection with them He is well able to take success to Himself. Through strange channels He can send blessings to souls, whatever He gives or denies to the unworthy workmen. Souls truly gathered in will soon get beyond their teaching."

continue to be happy, ¹⁹because I know that by means of your prayers and the help which comes from the Spirit of Jesus Christ, I shall be set free.

²⁰My deep desire and hope is that I shall never fail my duty, but that at all times, and especially right now, I shall be full of courage, so that with my whole being I shall bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. ²¹For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more.

²²But if by living on I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose.

²³I am caught from both sides. I want very much to leave this life and be with Christ, which is a far better thing; ²⁴but it is much more important, for your sake, that I remain alive. ²⁵I am sure of this, and so I know that I will stay. I will stay on with you all, to add to your progress and joy in the faith. ²⁶So when I am with you again you will have even more reason to be proud of me, in your life in Christ Jesus.

rejoice, for I know that ¹⁹through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly ²⁰expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ ²¹and to die is gain. If I am to ²²go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet, what shall I choose? I do not know! I am ²³torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary ²⁴for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I ²⁵know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my ²⁶being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

19. **Because I know.** Paul's enemies see his imprisonment as a source of shame and possible danger. But Paul sees *God's hand* at work in all this! Compare *Acts 23:11* and note. Paul says with confidence: *I shall be set free!* Compare *2 Tim. 4:18*.

20. **That I shall never fall.** *Johnson* says: "There is no anxiety about himself, only that he may glorify Christ."

21. **For what is life?** Paul's main thought is whether Christ will be honored by his life or his death. Compare *Acts 21:11-13* and notes. Death would bring more to him personally, as he would escape from suffering into Paradise!!!

22. **But if by living on.** Paul shows that his desire to stay and work for Christ in this world is equally as strong as his desire to go to his heavenly home!!!

23. **I am caught.** Note Paul views death as leading to a more complete life!!! See notes on *Luke 16:27-31*.

24. **For your sake.** He feels a deep obligation for the Philippians and all the Gentile Christians! Compare *2 Thess. 2:7* and note.

25. **I am sure.** Some think God told Paul this in a vision. Paul expects to stay in his earthly body a few more years, to add to their progress in the faith and their increased joy in Christ!!! See notes on *Acts 28:30-31*.

26. **So when.** "My release will show I have successfully defended the gospel before my judges, and I will have a further opportunity to teach you!"

²⁷Now, the important thing is that your manner of life be as the gospel of Christ requires, so that, whether or not I am able to go to see you, I will hear that you stand firm with one common purpose, and fight together, with only one wish, for the faith of the gospel. ²⁸Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose, and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory. ²⁹For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. ³⁰Now you can take part with me in the fight. It is the same one you saw me fighting in the past and the same one I am still fighting, as you hear.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Christ's Humility and Greatness

2 Does your life in Christ make you strong? Does his love comfort you? Do you have fellowship with the Spirit? Do you feel kindness and compassion for one another? ¹I urge you, then, make me completely happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and being

Imitating Christ's Humility

2 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

27. **Now, the important thing.** "You must stand firm for the truth and fight together against the *circumcision party* who want to make you slaves to The Law, and against the heathens who try to force you back into idolatry!"

28. **Don't be afraid.** Both the TEV and NIV follow the *corrected Greek text*. "Your courage in the face of persecution will prove to your enemies that they must lose and that you will win!" Compare *2 Thess. 1:4-5* and notes.

29. **The privilege.** "Super-saints" look for some *gift* to set them apart from other Christians - every gift, that is, except the one that is offered to all (*Phil. 3:10-11*).

30. **Now you can take part.** "This is the very same fight you saw me fighting in your own city, and that I am now fighting in Rome! You must expect such things yourself, and face these with courage and endurance!"

1. **Does?** Paul bases his encouragement to them on things they know to be true! *Robert Rainy* says: "Deeds are the true profession of our faith; they are the verification of our religious experience. And in this practical form we must overcome, not the temptations of other people or other ages, but our own. There is no more dangerous working of unbelief than that in which it never questions the doctrinal theory, but renders our Christianity cold and slack, and leads us to indulge a preference for a religion that goes easy."

2. **I urge you, then.** "Because you know all these things I just mentioned are true, I ask you just one thing more. Make my joy complete by really being *one in Christ!*" What Paul describes in this verse is a *messianic community* with a life style which finds its main expression in love and respect, and a common goal!

one in soul and mind. ³Don't do anything from selfish ambition, or from a cheap desire to boast; but be humble toward each other, never thinking you are better than others. ⁴And look out for each other's interests, not just for your own. ⁵The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:

⁶He always had the very nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God.

⁷Instead, of his own free will he gave it all up, and took the nature of a servant.

He became like man, and appeared in human likeness.

⁸He was humble and walked the path of obedience to death—his death on the cross.

Do nothing out of selfish **3**
ambition or vain conceit, but
in humility consider others
better than yourselves. Each **4**
of you should look not only
to your own interests, but
also to the interests of
others.

Your attitude should be **5**
the same as that of Christ
Jesus:

Who, being in very nature **6**
God, did not consider
equality with God some-
thing to be grasped, **7**
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature
of a servant, being made
in human likeness.

And being found in ap- **8**
pearance as a man, he
humbled himself and
became obedient to
death—even death on a
cross!

3. **Don't do anything.** Selfish ambition or a cheap desire to boast, would destroy the *spirit of community*!!! Christians must work together, not compete!!! **But be humble.** When each tries to seize the honor and glory for himself, no one is honored! But when each gives the honor and glory to the other person, all are honored!!!

4. **And look out for.** See *1 Cor. 10:24, 33* and notes.

5. **The attitude.** "Let me show you the example which Christ set for us!" There was a real threat of division in the Philippian church, and it was of vital importance that they develop a *spirit of community*! They must *relate to each other* through their reverence for Christ (*Eph. 5:21 and note*).

6. **He always had.** *Ernst Lohmeyer* has expanded the meaning of this section of verses. He says this is a very early Christian hymn, originally written in Aramaic (the Judean dialect of Hebrew), and sung in connection with the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal). But in studying this, note that Paul uses it to emphasize *Christian ethics*, not theology. **The very nature of God.** Compare *John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:3*. **But he did not think.** "He always had the very nature of God, even when he was in human form, but while in the flesh, he did not have an attitude of selfish ambition and try to make himself equal with God by force, even though he could have done it!" The next verse explains.

7. **Instead.** "The Son, who is the Eternal Logos, of his own free will gave up his *rank* (but not his divine nature) to take the nature of a servant and become what we are - a *human being*, with a human nature (*Rom. 8:3*) and be tempted as we are (*Heb. 4:15*)."

8. **He was humble.** The pagan world thought of *humility* as we think of *humiliation*! **Obedience.** Remember Paul is stressing the Christian ethic!!! Christ set the example by his obedience!!! **His death on the cross.** This is the ultimate humiliation!!! Note: (1) He always (even in human form) had the very nature of God, and also the *rank*. (2) He gave up his rank and the glory of heaven. (3) He took a servant's nature and became like us. (4) He shared our human nature completely, by also experiencing death. (5) He was completely humiliated in the shame of the Cross!

⁹For this reason God raised him to the highest place above, and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.
¹⁰And so, in honor of the name of Jesus, all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees,
¹¹and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Shining as Lights in the World

¹²So then, dear friends, as you always obeyed me when I was with you, it is even more important that you obey me now, while I am away from you. Keep on working, with fear and trembling,

Therefore God exalted ⁹ him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus ¹⁰ every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess ¹¹ that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Shining as Stars

Therefore, my dear ¹² friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with

9. **God.** The first part of this hymn tells what Christ did. The second part shows God's response. "*God raised him from the dead and took him up to the highest place above, in his crucified body!* This is how God rewarded Christ for his humility and obedience! I show you this as an example." **And gave him the name.** Names, to the ancient people, showed character and status. Being given a new name, then, shows Christ being raised to high rank and great honor! The question arises: "If Christ always had the very nature of God, is it possible that he is now higher than he was before???" *Robert Rainy* answers: "A line of contemplation, hard to follow yet inspiring, opens up in considering the Incarnation of our Lord as permanent. No day is coming in which that shall have to be looked upon as gone away into the past. This is suggestive as to the tie between Creator and creature, as to the bridge between Infinite and finite, to be evermore found in Him. But it may suffice here to have indicated the topic." Compare *Psalms 8; Heb. 9:24-28.*

10. **And so, in honor.** In honor to the authority that the name "Lord" represents, all Creation and even his enemies, fall on their knees in praise and submission to him!!! Angels, men, and even the dead!!!

11. **Proclaim.** It is the beings mentioned in *verse 10* who proclaim this. The symbolism is of subjects swearing loyalty to their king. *Johnson* says: "All the universe is called to confess him as Lord, and thus glorify God. All will yet confess him, either in joy or shame."

12. **So then.** Now Paul draws some needed lessons from this example of Christ he showed them in *verses 6-11*. **As you always obeyed me.** "Even though I cannot be with you in person, it is more important than ever that you show the attitude of humility and obedience that Christ had!!!" **Keep on working.** The Philippian church will not always have Paul available to them in person. It is very important that they be able to take care of themselves. It is necessary that they keep on working to complete their salvation!!! They do this by imitating the attitude and obedience which Christ demonstrated. *Johnson* says: "While Christ is our Savior, and the author of our salvation, we must accept him and work together with him . . . Unless we do our part Christ cannot save us." We must reach out through faith to seize Christ, and then continue to hold firmly to him! **Fear and trembling.** This is a favorite expression of Paul, and means: "reverence and awe."

to complete your salvation, ¹³because God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey his own purpose.

¹⁴Do everything without complaining or arguing, ¹⁵so that you may be innocent and pure, as God's perfect children who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky, ¹⁶as you offer them the message of life. If you do so, I shall have reason to be proud of you on the Day of Christ, because it will show that all my effort and work have not been wasted.

¹⁷Perhaps my life's blood is to be poured out like an offering on the sacrifice that your faith offers to God. If that is so, I am glad, and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸In the same way, you too must be glad and share your joy with me.

fear and trembling, for it is ¹³ God who works in you to will and do what pleases him.

Do everything without ¹⁴ complaining or arguing, so ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as ¹⁶ you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. But even if I am ¹⁷ being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you ¹⁸ too should be glad and rejoice with me.

13. **Because God.** After stressing personal responsibility in verse 12, Paul shows God at work in us. *Johnson* says: "God works in the converted person by his word and Spirit. His Spirit is a helper. He does not destroy our free will, for we may resist him (*1 Thess. 5:19*)."
To make you willing and able. *Robert Rainy* says: "All efforts to divide the ground between God and man go astray. In the inward process of salvation, and especially in this 'willing and doing,' God does all, and also man does all. But God takes precedence. For it is He that quickeneth [makes alive] the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were. Here we may say, as the Apostle does in another case, 'This is a great mystery.' Let us recognize it as a mystery bound up with any hope we ourselves have of proving to be children of God. And under the sense of it, with fear and trembling let us work, for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do."

14. **Without.** "Do not be like restive slaves, who complain about everything they are asked to do; nor like disobedient children, who argue with their parents about everything they are asked to do!"

15. **Innocent and pure.** If they do as Paul urges them, they will be innocent and pure. **As God's perfect children.** Compare *Eph. 5:8* and note. **You must shine.** Compare *Matt. 5:16* and note.

16. **As you offer them.** *Johnson* says: "Always preaching Christ in word, in life, and in deed. That was their work. Unless they did this they were a failure."
Reason to be proud of you. Compare *1 Thess. 2:19-20* and notes.

17. **Perhaps my life's blood.** Paul viewed his service to Christ as an offering for the Gentiles. In *Phil. 1:25* he seems confident he will not die just yet. Perhaps here he looks into the future to the time his life's blood will be poured out as an offering - poured over the sacrifice of the Gentile Christian's faith. Paul was beheaded in Rome, either 67 or 68 A.D.

18. **In the same way.** "You must have this same attitude and be glad when you suffer and even die for the gospel! In this way you will share your joy in Christ with me!"

Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹I trust in the Lord Jesus that I will be able to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be encouraged by news of you. ²⁰He is the only one who shares my feelings, and who really cares about you. ²¹Everyone else is concerned only about his own affairs, not about the cause of Jesus Christ. ²²And you yourselves know how he has proved his worth, how he and I, like a son and his father, have worked together for the sake of the gospel. ²³I hope to send him to you, then, as soon as I know how things are going to turn out for me. ²⁴And I trust in the Lord that I myself will be able to come to you soon.

²⁵I have thought it necessary to send you our brother Epaphroditus, who has worked and fought by my side, and who has served as your messenger in helping me. ²⁶He is anxious to see you all, and is very upset because you heard that

Timothy and Epaphroditus

I hope in the Lord Jesus to ¹⁹send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like ²⁰him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For ²¹everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know ²²that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to ²³send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord ²⁴that I myself will come soon.

But I think it is necessary ²⁵to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For ²⁶he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard

19. **To send Timothy.** "Through the help of the Lord Jesus, I hope to send Timothy to you soon. He can tell you about me, and he can bring back the good news of what you are doing!"

20. **He is.** *Robert Rainy* says: "Notice the importance which may justly attach to human instrumentalities. One is not as good as another. Some are far more fit for use than others are. The Apostle thought earnestly on the point who was fittest to go, and he was glad he had a man like Timothy to send. It is true that the supreme source of success in gospel work is God Himself; and sometimes He gives unexpected success to unlikely instruments. But yet, as a rule, much depends on men being adapted to their work. When God prepares fresh blessing for His Church, He commonly raises up men fitted for the service to be rendered. Therefore we do well to pray earnestly for men eminently qualified to do the Lord's work."

21. **Everyone else.** Paul does not mean his associates, if any are with him. *MacKnight* says: "For all the teachers here seek their own pleasure and profit, and not the things belonging to Christ Jesus."

22. **And you yourselves know.** They knew Timothy well (*Acts 16:3, 12*). Paul speaks like a proud father! Timothy played an important part in the spread of Christianity!

23. **As soon as I know.** The fact that Paul is inspired, does not mean the future is an open book to him! He feels the need to keep Timothy with him until he hears the Emperor's verdict!

24. **And I trust.** Paul has great confidence in the Lord, and may have had a vision about this, yet he knows he cannot place an obligation on the Lord. Compare *Phil. 1:25-26* and notes.

25. **Epaphroditus.** This is the messenger which the Philippian church sent to Paul. Now Paul is going to send him back to them immediately, with this Letter.

26. **He is anxious.** Epaphroditus has stayed at Rome much longer than he had intended to do. He is eager to get home, and is upset because he knows they have worried about him!

he was sick. ²⁷Indeed he was sick, and almost died. But God had pity on him, and not only on him but on me, too, and spared me even greater sorrow. ²⁸I am all the more eager, then, to send him to you, so that you will be glad again when you see him, and my own sorrow will disappear. ²⁹Receive him, then, with all joy, as a brother in the Lord. Show respect to all such men as he, ³⁰because he risked his life and nearly died, for the sake of the work of Christ, in order to give me the help that you yourselves could not give.

he was ill. Indeed he was ill, ²⁷ and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, ²⁸ so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost ²⁹ died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me. ³⁰

The True Righteousness

3 In conclusion, my brothers, may the Lord give you much joy. It doesn't bother me to repeat what I have written before, and it will add to your safety. ²Watch out for those who do evil things, those dogs, men who insist on

No Confidence in the Flesh

3 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. ² Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those

27. **Almost died.** This makes some ask: "Why didn't Paul use his power to heal this man???" *MacKnight* says: "Those who possessed the power of miracles could not exercise it according to their own pleasure, but according to the direction of the Holy Spirit; otherwise Paul would have most certainly have healed Epaphroditus, who, as implied in *verse 30*, had fallen into this dangerous sickness through fatigue which he underwent in assisting the apostle. Miracles of healing were generally wrought for convincing unbelievers." **But God.** Paul implies that Epaphroditus' recovery was God's response to their earnest prayers!

28. **So that you.** "I could use his help here, but I send him back to you, so that your own happiness will make me happy too!"

29. **With all joy.** This is a genuine praise for one who had demonstrated his willingness to *lay down his life* for the Good News!!! **Show respect.** It is right and proper to show respect and give honor to all who show themselves worthy of it!!!

30. **Because.** "He risked his life and nearly died! He thought no price was too high to pay, to spread the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free!!! He was your *proxy* to me!"

1. **May the Lord.** Joy from the Lord = joy in the Lord. "Be jubilant in your knowledge of the Good News of God's finished work in Christ!!!" **To repeat.** Paul had written many letters to oppose the false teaching of the *circumcision party*. Since these false teachers adapted their *sales talk* to the prejudices of the people, Paul had to expose it in a different way in each case. The Philippians have certainly read the things he has already written. Now he repeats himself to expose the *circumcision party* in a way especially adapted to them! If members of the *circumcision party* were not already there at Philippi, they would soon be coming!!! *Forewarned is forearmed!!!*

2. **Watch out.** Compare *2 Cor. 11:13-15*. Paul calls them: "those who do evil things," and "dogs." In ancient times, dogs were not "man's best friend," but vicious scavengers who snarled and snapped!!! **Who insist on cutting.** Compare *Gal. 5:12* and note.

cutting the body. ³For we, not they, are the ones who have received the true circumcision, because we worship God by his Spirit, and rejoice in our life in Christ Jesus. We do not put any trust in external ceremonies. ⁴I could, of course, put my trust in such things. If anyone thinks he can trust in external ceremonies, I have even more reason to feel that way. ⁵I was circumcised when I was a week old. I am an Israelite by birth, of the tribe of Benjamin, a pure-blooded Hebrew. So far as keeping the Jewish Law is concerned, I was a Pharisee, ⁶and I was so zealous that I persecuted the church. So far as a man can be righteous by obeying the commands of the Law, I was without fault. ⁷But all those things that I might count as profit I now reckon as loss, for Christ's sake. ⁸Not only those things; I reckon everything as complete loss for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere gar-

3 mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circum-
4 cision, we who worship by
the Spirit of God, who glory
in Christ Jesus, and who put
no confidence in the flesh—
though I myself have reasons
for such confidence. 4

5 If anyone else thinks he
has reasons to put confi-
dence in the flesh, I have
more: circumcised on the
eighth day, of the people of
Israel, of the tribe of Ben-
jamin, a Hebrew of He-
brews; in regard to the law,
a Pharisee; as for zeal, per-
secuting the church; as for
legalistic righteousness,
faultless. 5

6 But whatever was to my
profit I now consider loss for
the sake of Christ. What is
more, I consider everything
a loss compared to the sur-
passing greatness of know-
ing Christ Jesus my Lord, for
whose sake I have lost all
things. I consider them rub-
bish, that I may gain Christ
6

3. For we, not they. Compare *Rom. 2:29; 4:12* and notes. By his Spirit. Both the TEV and NIV follow the corrected Greek Text. The fact that a person is a Jew by nationality and has been circumcised, does not give him the right to worship God. Because Christians have the Spirit (*Rom. 8:15*), they worship God as sons and daughters!!! To renounce Christ, they had to renounce the Spirit also (*Heb. 10:29* and note). In external ceremonies. Compare *Col. 2:11-13* and notes.

4. I could, of course. "If salvation came by these things, I could trust in them just as much as anyone, as I will now show you."

5. I was circumcised. Week old = on the eighth day. "I am no Gentile converted to Judaism! My circumcision when a week old proves it! Neither were my parents and ancestors Gentiles converted to Judaism, as I show you by telling you I am of the tribe of Benjamin, a pure-blooded Hebrew!" I was a Pharisee. A member of the strictest of the Jewish sects. It was Pharisaism at its worst, not its best, that caused its disgrace.

6. So zealous. Because he had seen Christianity as a heresy, his zeal had driven him to try to destroy this new thing! Certainly he never forgot what he had done in ignorance (*1 Tim. 1:13-16*)! So far as. Paul says all this to show that by Jewish standards, he was as good a Jew as any who ever lived (except Christ), and that his Jewish credentials were much better than those of the circumcision party.

7. But all those things. "I could be very proud of my ancestors and my Jewish background. But now they are just things to be thrown away, because they have no value in Christ!" Johnson says: "Instead of saving him, a trust in them would have been eternal ruin."

8. Not only. "Not only my Jewish heritage, but everything which men are so proud of, and by which they try to save themselves - all of this I gladly throw away for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!!!"

bage, so that I might gain Christ, ⁹and be completely united with him. No longer do I have a righteousness of my own, the kind to be gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God, and is based on faith. ¹⁰All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his resurrection; to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death, ¹¹in the hope that I myself will be raised from death to life.

Running toward the Goal

¹²I do not claim that I have already succeeded or have already become perfect. I keep going on to try to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has already won me to himself. ¹³Of course, brothers, I really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is

and be found in him, not ⁹ having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I ¹⁰ want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and ¹¹ so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Pressing on Toward the Goal

Not that I have already ¹² obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I ¹³ do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining

9. **And be.** Compare *Rom. 8:1-4* and notes. **No longer.** Compare *Rom. 10:3* and note. **That is given through faith.** Compare *Rom. 4:3* and note. We reach out through faith to seize Christ and make ourselves part of Him!!! Compare what Paul says in *Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:17* and notes.

10. **All I want.** *Robert Rainy* says: "The Christ of Paul is the Lord who met him by the way (*Acts 9:5*). It is Christ dead, risen, and ascended; it is Christ with the reason and the result of His finished work made plain, and with the relation unveiled which He sustains to men who live by Him; it is Christ with the significance of His wonderful history for believers shining out from Him - Christ *VESTITUS EVANGELIO*."

11. **In the hope.** Union with Christ opens up Eternity!!! Some think Paul says *in the hope*, because the false teachers were saying the Resurrection was already past (compare *2 Tim. 2:17-18* and notes). They claimed to already be perfect and to have the blessings of Eternity! This heresy has *popped up* again and again over the centuries.

12. **I do not claim.** Evidently the false teachers claimed they were righteous because they obeyed The Law, and that they had already been raised from death. Paul makes no such claim!!! The prize still is in the future for him (compare *Heb. 11:40*). **Perfect.** This word means the perfection that comes with the end of time and the coming of Eternity. The false teachers probably claimed to be like the angels, spiritually perfect, and they may have said this excused them from all moral laws! In contrast, Paul says: **I keep going on.** Paul keeps on reaching out through faith, trying to win the prize of life for which Christ has already won him (at Paul's conversion).

13. **Of course, brothers.** "I was a better Jew than these false teachers, but I do not think I am as good a Christian as they *claim* to be. That is, I do not claim to have already won the prize." **The one thing I do.** "I forget everything in the past and all the progress I have already made! I do my best to cover the part of the race that is still ahead so that I can reach the prize!!!" Paul will not allow the past to dominate the present, and as he *lets go* the past, he can more easily reach ahead to the future.

ahead. ¹⁴So I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above.

¹⁵All of us who are spiritually mature should have this same attitude. If, however, some of you have a different attitude, God will make this clear to you. ¹⁶However that may be, let us go forward according to the same rules we have followed until now.

¹⁷Keep on imitating me, my brothers. We have set the right example for you, so pay attention to those who follow it. ¹⁸I have told you this many times before, and now I repeat it, with tears: there are many whose lives make them enemies of Christ's death on the cross. ¹⁹They are going to end up in hell, because their god is their bodily desires, they are proud of what they should be

toward what is ahead, I ¹⁴ press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

All of us who are mature ¹⁵ should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to ¹⁶ what we have already attained.

Join with others in follow- ¹⁷ ing my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have ¹⁸ often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their ¹⁹ destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and

14. **So I run straight toward.** The goal marks the end of the race. Paul must complete his race and reach the goal in order to be given the prize. The prize is God's call to life above, that is, to Eternity. Compare the language in *Rev. 11:12*.

15. **Who are spiritually mature.** This is a play on words: he is not *perfect*, he is *mature*. Those who are *mature* should have this attitude: forget the past; run straight toward the goal. **If, however.** It may be that the false teachers who claimed to be *perfect*, also claimed God spoke directly to them. "If you have a different attitude, the God who speaks to you will make this clear!" We can also understand it: "If you really want to be perfect, God, in his word, will make this clear to you!"

16. **However.** "You have already run part of the race! Even though some of you have a different attitude than I have, let us run straight toward the goal using the same rules we have followed until now!"

17. **Imitating me.** *Robert Rainy* says: "Do not mistake the whole nature of Christianity; do not altogether miss the path in which God's children go. It is one Spirit that dwells in the Church; let not your walk forsake the fellowship of that Spirit. Christians are not bound to any human authority: Christ is their Master." **We have set.** Paul and the other servants of Christ have set the right example *by following Christ!* The Philippians are to pay attention to see who is following this right example, and also follow them!

18. **I have told you.** Again and again Paul has warned about those who would refuse to follow the fellowship of the Spirit. Compare *Acts 20:29-31*. **Whose lives make them enemies.** They are enemies of Christ's death because: of their sinful lives (*verse 19*); their teaching about The Law (*verse 9*); their refusal to suffer with Christ for the truth (*verse 10*). **On the cross.** Christ-on-the-cross is the source of salvation (*1 Cor. 1:23*). By teaching forgiveness through the sacrifices of The Law, the *circumcision party* in effect preached a cross-less Christ and destroyed the very foundation of the Good News!!! Compare *Heb. 10:29* and note.

19. **To end up in hell.** *APOLEIA*. See note on *Acts 8:20*. *Robert Rainy* says: "Probably, as was said, the Apostle is speaking of a class of men whose faults were gross, so that at least an Apostolic eye could not hesitate to read the verdict that must be passed upon them. But then we must consider that his object in doing this was to address a warning to men to whom he imputed no such gross failings; concerning

ashamed of, and they think only of things that belong to this world. ²⁰We, however, are citizens of heaven, and we eagerly wait for our Savior to come from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will change our weak mortal bodies and make them like his own glorious body, using that power by which he is able to bring all things under his rule.

Instructions

4 So, then, my brothers—and how dear you are to me, and how I miss you! how happy you make me, and how proud I am of you!—this, dear brothers, is how you should stand firm in your life in the Lord.

²Euodia and Syntyche, please, I beg you, try

their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship ²⁰ is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, ²¹ by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

4 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

Exhortations

I plead with Euodia and I ² plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

whom, indeed, he was persuaded for other things, even things that accompany salvation; but whom he knew to be exposed to influences tending in the same direction, and whom he expected to see preserved only in the way of vigilance and diligence."

20. We, however. In contrast to those who think only of worldly things, Paul and all who imitate his example are CITIZENS OF HEAVEN! Christians are foreigners and refugees, living in this world only until they can go on to their heavenly home!!! For this reason, the world is no longer important to them (although people are important). **We eagerly wait.** The false teachers said that sin and death had already been conquered! Paul shows that we as Christians eagerly wait for our Savior to come! Not until then will our salvation be complete, as he shows in *verse 21*. Christ's **SECOND COMING** will signal the defeat of death (*1 Cor. 15:25-26*)!

21. He will change. Our bodies are not vile, but weak and mortal. All that will change when Christ comes!!! *Robert Rainy* says: "How decisive the change is which Christ completes at His coming - how distinctive, therefore, and unworldly, that citizenship which takes its type from heaven where He is, and from the hope of His appearing - is last of all set forth. . . . In our body we carry about with us what seems to mock the idea of an ethereal and ideal life. And when we die, the corruption of the grave speaks of anything but hope. Here, then, in this very point the salvation of Christ shall complete its triumph, saving us all over and all through." Compare *1 John 3:1-3* and notes.

1. So then, my brothers. This *burst of praise* for the Philippian Christians forms the link between the closing verses of chapter 3, and the instructions he is about to give. **You should stand firm.** *Robert Rainy* says: "How the Apostle longed to see this victory achieved in the case of all these Philippians, who were the treasure and the fruit of his life and labor! Be decided about this, be clear about it, cast every other way of it from you."

2. Euodia and Syntyche. Macedonian women were given an unusual amount of freedom. Women were more than usually active in the Philippian church. Lydia was the first convert, and her house became a meetingplace (*Acts ch 16*). These two Philippian women had a difference of opinion, and we see in them the slight dissension which Paul hints at in places. What it was all about, we have no way of knowing. From the whole tone of this Letter, it cannot have gotten seriously out of hand as yet. *Schinz* says: "In such a pure church, even slight bickerings would make a great impression." Paul begs each of them individually, wanting to treat each one exactly the same.

to agree as sisters in the Lord. ³And you too, my faithful partner, I want you to help these women; for they have worked hard with me to spread the gospel, together with Clement and all my other fellow workers, whose names are in God's book of the living.

⁴May you always be joyful in your life in the Lord. I say it again: rejoice!

⁵Show a gentle attitude toward all. The Lord is coming soon. ⁶Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. ⁷And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe, in union with Christ Jesus.

⁸In conclusion, my brothers, fill your minds with those things that are good and deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure,

Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always. ⁴
I will say it again: Rejoice!
Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁵
Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁷

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think a- ⁸

3. **My faithful partner.** Paul asks a third party to help these two settle their differences. Who this faithful partner was, we have no way of knowing. **Have worked hard.** Paul certainly refers to Euodia and Syntyche. **Together with Clement.** These together had worked hard to spread the gospel. Some connect this Clement with the celebrated bishop of Rome, but others think this cannot be so! **All my other fellow workers.** History gives no record of the many who helped spread Christianity! Only important, is the fact that their names are in *God's book of the living* (see note on *Rev. 20:14-15*).

4. **Always be joyful! Rejoice!** expresses the mood of this Letter. "Instead of being sad about the evils to which you are exposed, may you always be joyful in your life in the Lord. And because this attitude is very important to Christians, I say it again: rejoice!"

5. **Show a gentle attitude.** Gentleness and kindness are characteristics of Christ! See *2 Cor. 10:1* and note. **Coming soon.** Christians live in a "last hour" situation. See *1 John 2:18* and note.

6. **Don't worry about anything.** See *Matt. 6:25-34* and notes. **Ask God.** "Instead of worrying, you should put yourselves in God's hands! Let your prayer grow out of a thankful heart! Ask God for everything you need, and he will either give it to you, or give you the strength to be patient and endure whatever problems God allows to come your way!" See note on *Rom. 8:26*.

7. **And God's peace.** Paul describes this *peace which God gives* in terms of "one who stands guard duty to secure the area." **In union.** God's peace is available only to those who are united with Christ and are in his fellowship.

8. **In conclusion. Verse 6** shows that the Christian must actively reach out to God to receive God's peace. Paul's conclusion further explains this reaching out. **Fill your minds.** The Christian is constantly faced with choices, and because he is *new* (*2 Cor. 5:17*), he must purposely fill his (or her) mind with those things that are good and deserve praise!!! Most of these are familiar enough to need no further explanation. **Noble** = of good character, worthy, respectable. **Lovely** = those things whose grace attracts, things which produce love as a response. Greeks would not view this list of virtues (ethical qualities) as religious, but Paul does - in the context of the *last hour situation* (verse 5).

lovely, and honorable. ⁹Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my deeds. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.

Thanks for the Gift

¹⁰How great is the joy I have in my life in the Lord! After so long a time, you once more had the chance of showing that you care for me. I don't mean that you had quit caring for me—you did not have a chance to show it. ¹¹And I am not saying this because I feel neglected; for I have learned to be satisfied with what I have. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. ¹³I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.

¹⁴But it was very good of you to help me in my

bout such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Thanks for the Gifts

I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstance. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Yet it was good of you to 14

9. **Put into practice.** Paul is saying for them to imitate the complete example which he set for them by following Christ! Compare *Phil. 3:17* and note. **And the God.** Faith becomes perfect through action (*James 2:22*). As you reach out through faith, both *God's peace* and the *God who gives us peace* will be yours!!!

10. **How great is the joy!** "I praise God as the source of all blessings, and I want you to know how happy I was when Epaphroditus came to me with your gift!" Paul was always very sensitive about money, because of the slander against him (*1 Thess. 2:5; 1 Cor. 9:3-18; 2 Cor. 11:8-9*). Note that Paul is *not* scolding them for taking so long, but rather praising their generosity when his circumstances gave them one more opportunity to help!

11. **And I am not. Neglected** is probably the better translation. Would Paul be in actual need, when there were so many Christians in Rome??? If he was, it would be due to the influence of the *circumcision party* (*Phil. 1:17*). Probably it is not the gift itself, but the fact that they used this opportunity to show their great love for him, that gives him such joy! Paul had learned the hard way, to be satisfied with what he had, whether material things or companionship!

12. **I know what it is.** This explains the "I have learned to be satisfied" of *verse 11*. Compare *2 Cor. 6:4-10* and notes.

13. **By the power.** This sums it all up: *by the power that Christ gives me*. The Stoics taught that a man ought to be self-sufficient and completely independent! Paul knows he has not done it alone! Compare *2 Cor. 9:8*.

14. **But it was very good of you.** "Even though I could have survived, by the power that Christ gives me, I want you to know how much I appreciate what you did! It was very good of you to help me in my troubles!"

troubles. ¹⁵You Philippians yourselves know very well that when I left Macedonia, in the early days of preaching the Good News, you were the only church to help me; you were the only ones who shared my profits and losses. ¹⁶More than once, when I needed help in Thessalonica, you sent it to me. ¹⁷It is not that I just want to receive gifts; rather, I want to see profit added to your account. ¹⁸Here, then, is my receipt for everything you have given me—and it has been more than enough! I have all I need, now that Epaphroditus has brought me all your gifts. These are like a sweet-smelling offering to God, a sacrifice which is acceptable and pleasing to him. ¹⁹And my God, with all his abundant wealth in Christ Jesus, will supply all your needs. ²⁰To our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

share in my troubles. More- 15
over, as you Philippians
know, in the early days of
your acquaintance with the
gospel, when I set out from
Macedonia, not one church
shared with me in the matter
of giving and receiving, ex-
cept you only; for even when 16
I was in Thessalonica, you
sent me aid again and again
when I was in need. Not that 17
I am looking for a gift, but
I am looking for what may
be credited to your account.
I have received full payment 18
and even more; I am amply
supplied, now that I have
received from Epaphroditus
the gifts you sent. They are
a fragrant offering, an ac-
ceptable sacrifice, pleasing
to God. And my God will 19
meet all your needs accord-
ing to his glorious riches in
Christ Jesus.

To our God and Father be 20
glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

15. You Philippians. Paul looks back to their actions in the past. *Kennedy* has Paul say: "But this is no new thing, for you have always been generous. You know this as well as I do." **Profits and losses.** Paul had given them priceless spiritual gifts! It was only *squaring the account* for them to share their material things with him! *Robert Rainy* says: "In this connection it is fit we should remember that the view we take of money, and the use we make of it, are referred to with extraordinary frequency in the New Testament, as a decisive test of Christian sincerity. This feature of Bible teaching is very faintly realized by many. The other point noteworthy in relation to this Philippian gift is the assurance that it shall be recompensed (rewarded). God will not be unfaithful to reward their work and labor of love, in that they have ministered to His servant. We are not to shrink from the doctrine of reward [just] because it has been perverted."

16. More than once. Even though Thessalonica was a larger and richer city, Paul would not allow the people there to support him (*1 Thess. 2:5; 2 Thess. 3:8*). Some think the "more than once" also includes other places, such as Corinth.

17. It is not. Again Paul's sensitivity about money shows through. "I mention all this about your great help in the past, not because I just want to receive gifts, but I want to see your good actions credited to your account." See *Acts 20:35* and note.

18. Here, then. "I write *paid in full* on any obligation you might have to me! Your generous gift through Epaphroditus has more than paid any debt you might have to me! I have all I need!" **A sweet smelling offering.** Compare *Rom. 12:1-2* and notes. Their good actions are praise to God (compare *James 1:27* and note).

19. And my God. "Since you did not forget my needs, God will not forget yours!" Compare *2 Cor. 9:8* and note.

20. To our God and Father. "Let us join in praise to our God and Father who has given us this abundant wealth in Christ Jesus, so that everything belongs to us (*1 Cor. 3:21-23*) through his great love!!!"

Final Greetings

²¹Greetings to all God's people who belong to Christ Jesus. The brothers here with me send you their greetings. ²²All God's people here send greetings, especially those who belong to the Emperor's palace.

²³May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Final Greetings

Greet all the saints in 21 Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. All the saints send you 22 greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

The grace of the Lord 23 Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

21. **Greetings.** "Greetings to all in your city who are now God's people because they belong to Christ!" The brothers here. This shows that Paul was not completely alone.

22. **All God's people here.** He expands this greeting to include all the Christians at Rome. [*Saints*: see note on *1 Cor. 6:11.*] **The Emperor's Palace.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "SH. point out that a number of the names mentioned for salutation in *Rom. 16* occur in the *Corpus* of Latin Inscriptions as members of the Imperial household, which seems to have been one of the chief centers of the Christian community at Rome. In the first century A.D. most of the Emperor's household servants came from the East. Under Claudius and Nero they were people of real importance. And we find, from history, that Christian slaves had great influence over their masters." Traditional history links Seneca, brother of Gallio (*Acts 18:12*), with Paul. *Josephus* identifies Nero's wife Poppaea as a Gentile converted to Judaism (proselyte of the gate), and some think she might have become a Christian. We have no way of knowing for sure about this, but Paul cites the Christians in the Emperor's Palace as evidence of his success in his service to Christ.

23. **May the grace.** This is his benediction as an apostle. Spirit = human spirit = you all (as persons).

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

This letter, the letter to Philemon, and the letter to the Ephesians [which was also sent to Laodicea (*Col. 4:16*)] were all written by Paul while in prison at Rome [*Acts 28:16*]. The three cities mentioned in this letter [Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis] were close to each other, all in the province of Asia [see map].

No one knows for sure that Paul planted the churches here, but Dr. James MacKnight believes the churches at Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis were planted by him, with the help of Timothy. Epaphras (*Col. 1:7*) may have been one of the first converts, and may have also helped plant the church here.

In this area the hedonism of the Greeks met the mysticism of the East. Also, large colonies of Jews had been settled in this area [from Babylon] by one of the Macedonian kings of Syria. Their Judaism had been influenced by the religion of Zoroaster. There was danger that these things would modify Christianity and distort its truth. This was a serious matter (*Gal. 1:8*). Paul stresses the place of Jesus at the Father's right side [the place of honor], also his role in Creation (*Col. 1:16-17*). The false teachers evidently were saying that the [animal] sacrifices of the Law of Moses were needed, because Christianity had no sacrifices for sin. Paul shows that it is THE SACRIFICE of Jesus - *once for all time* - that sets us free from sin (*Col. 1:13-14*). False teachers were saying that Jesus had not given all the truth, but angels would reveal it. Therefore Paul stresses that Jesus is the KEY (*Col. 2:3*) to ALL God's wisdom and knowledge.

The date of writing is probably 62 A.D.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

1 From Paul, who by God's will is an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy—

2To God's people in Colossae, those who are our faithful brothers in Christ:

May God our Father give you grace and peace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

3We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. **4**For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of your love for all God's people. **5**When the true message, the Good News, first came to you, you heard of the hope it offers. So your faith and love are based on what you hope for, which is kept safe for you in heaven. **6**The gospel is bringing blessings and spreading through the whole world, just as it has among you ever since the day you first heard of the grace of God and came

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: **2**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven, and which you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is producing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **3**
4
5
6

1-2. **From Paul, who by God's will is an apostle.** Not elected or appointed, but chosen by God. **And from our brother Timothy.** Paul's other letters written at this time, show that Timothy was in Rome. He is mentioned seven times in the introduction of Paul's letters to the churches: here; in *2 Corinthians*; *Philippians*; *1 Thessalonians*; *2 Thessalonians* and *Philemon*. **To God's people.** This name was applied to all Christians. Paul calls them "faithful brothers."

3. **We always give thanks.** Both Paul and Timothy made a regular habit of prayer for all the churches in their care.

4. **For we have heard of your faith.** Probably from Epaphras (who was a member of the church at Colossa - *verse 7; 4:12*), who was with Paul at Rome.

5. **So your faith and love.** He gives thanks for their hope of heaven, which is the basis for their faith and love. This hope was part of the gospel preached to them, and they look to the spiritual treasure kept safe in heaven for them.

6. **Spreading through the whole world.** The gospel spread freely among all the nations under Roman influence, and people from other nations took the gospel with them as they returned from Roman territory to their native lands. (See note on *Matt. 24:14*.) **Just as it has among you.** The gospel creates holy lives in those who listen to it.

to know it as it really is. ⁷You learned this from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful worker for Christ on our behalf. ⁸He told us of the love that the Spirit has given you.

⁹For this reason we always pray for you, ever since we heard about you. We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, with all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives. ¹⁰Then you will be able to live as the Lord wants, and always do what pleases him. Your lives will be fruitful in all kinds of good works, and you will grow in your knowledge of God. ¹¹May you be made strong with all the strength which comes from his glorious might, so that you may be able to endure everything with patience. ¹²And give thanks, with joy, to the Father, who has made you fit to have your share of what God has reserved for his people in the kingdom of light. ¹³He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the kingdom of his dear Son,

You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. 8

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the 9 10 11 12 13

7. **You learned this from Epaphras.** He is thought to be the one who planted the church here, acting by Paul's direction [or perhaps assisting Paul]. We do not know where this Epaphras became a Christian, but possibly at Ephesus, the capital of the province, during Paul's three year stay there. He is not the Epaphroditus of *Phil. 2:25; 4:18*. He is praised as a faithful worker, and is identified with the church there (*Col. 4:12*).

8. **He told us.** He was with Paul at Rome as this was being written.

9. **For this reason.** Because of all that Paul had heard about them. **We ask God to fill you.** Knowledge would be their best protection against false teaching, and would make them more confident. The Holy Spirit gave the early church the wisdom and understanding which we now have in the form of the New Testament (*1 Cor. 12:8; Eph. 1:3,8-9*).

10. **Then you will be able to live.** They would praise God with their lives, by living as he wants them to do. **Fruitful.** Good works and knowledge honor God.

11. **May you be made strong.** God offers to give us strength, so we can be strong, even when falsely accused (*1 Cor. 10:13*).

12. **And give thanks.** No matter what you may face, thank the Father and praise him. The Colossians had once been unfit for the Kingdom, but God had made them fit to receive every blessing in Christ. **Light.** Purity, truth. Darkness symbolizes evil, ignorance, etc.

13. **He rescued us.** We were prisoners of the power of darkness - Satan (compare *Luke 22:53*). **Brought us safe into the Kingdom.** God, through the gospel (*Rom. 1:16-17*) had already rescued the Colossians from Satan's power and they are now safe in the Kingdom of Jesus (his church). This took place when they were born of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*). Note this speaks of the Kingdom as already in existence.

¹⁴by whom we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven.

The Person and Work of Christ

¹⁵Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the firstborn Son, superior to all created things. ¹⁶For by him God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and the unseen things, including spiritual powers, lords, rulers, and authorities. God created the whole universe through him and for him. ¹⁷He existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place. ¹⁸He is the head of his body, the church; he is the source of the body's life; he is the firstborn Son who was raised from death, in order that he alone might have the first place in all things. ¹⁹For it was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full

Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 14

The Supremacy of Christ

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his full- 15
16
17
18
19

14. **By whom we are set free.** God's act in Christ. It is the totality of Christ's sacrifice which is the basis of our being set free (*Eph. 1:7*). Satan is holding the whole human race prisoner. Jesus made a way to escape.

15. **Christ is the visible likeness.** God is Spirit - invisible. Christ came and took a body of flesh - the Eternal Logos in human form (*John 14:10; Heb. 1:1-3*). **The firstborn Son.** That is, he existed before creation began. It does *not* say he was the *first created*, but the firstborn. See *John 1:2-3*. **Superior to all created things.** Jesus was not created, but is God - the Logos.

16. **For by him God created everything.** He existed before any creation. God made everything by him. Compare *John 1:3; Heb. 1:2*. **The seen.** The material universe. **The unseen.** Angels, both good and bad. This places Christ far above every angel, evil spirit, etc., including Satan [who is a fallen angel]. Everything and everyone, both angels and men, are included by the "spiritual powers, lords, rulers and authorities." (*Eph. 1:21*) **Through him and for him.** This shows Christ's place. See also *1 Cor. 15:24-28*.

17. **He existed before all things.** He was with the Father before anything at all was created, including angels. **In union with him.** He is the one who placed them in their proper sequence. See also *Heb. 1:3&18*.

18. **He is the head of his body.** The church [*Matt. 16:18*] is identified as the spiritual *body* of Christ, and he is its head. (See *Eph. 1:22*) **The source.** Of the new creation (*2 Cor. 5:17*). **Firstborn Son.** He was the first to conquer death - rising from the dead never to be recaptured by death. See also *1 Cor. 15:20*.

19. **The full nature of God.** This can be understood of Christ's humanity (*Col. 2:9*), and also that "completeness" is in him.

nature of God. ²⁰Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's death on the cross, and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven.

²¹At one time you were far away from God and were his enemies because of the evil things you did and thought. ²²But now, by means of the physical death of his Son, God has made you his friends, in order to bring you, holy, pure, and faultless, into his presence. ²³You must, of course, continue faithful on a firm and sure foundation, and not allow yourselves to be shaken from the hope you gained when you heard the gospel. It is of this gospel that I, Paul, became a servant—this gospel which has been preached to everybody in the world.

Paul's Ministry to the Church

²⁴And now I am happy about my sufferings for you. For by means of my physical sufferings I help complete what still remains of Christ's sufferings on behalf of his body, which is the

ness dwell in him, and ²⁰through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Once you were alienated, ²¹from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now ²²he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in ²³your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Paul's Labor for the Church

Now I rejoice in what was ²⁴24 suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the

20. Through the Son. See *Eph. 1:10*. God made peace. God chose to focus his saving power through the historical act of Christ's death. It is through the *totality* of this sin-offering that we can become friends with God and friends with each other. **All things.** Compare *Romans 8:19-21*. All of Creation seems to have been cursed in the sin of Adam. God has chosen to remove this curse through Christ.

21. You were far away. The evil things which mankind does and thinks makes them the enemies of God - hostile to him and to each other. Christians *had* been like that, but became *new* in Jesus Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*).

22. By means of the physical death of his Son. Not God - but rather men and women are changed through the physical death of Christ. Without Christ and the Cross, there could be no Good News! God has made this "bloody death" both the symbol and the *reality* of being accepted as God's friend. Read *1 Cor. 1:18-31*. **Holy, pure, faultless.** God pronounces us "not guilty" as the result of our union with Christ (*Gal. 3:26-29*).

23. You must, of course, continue faithful. Our new relationship to God because of our union with Christ, requires us to live as God directs us to do, and, to hold firmly to every promise. The Devil will attempt to destroy *hope*. **Which has been preached.** See note on *verse 6*.

24. For by means of my physical sufferings. He was in prison because he preached Christ. He could be happy because of the results of this suffering. **I help complete.** Christ's sufferings on the Cross are complete! But, Christ shares the sufferings of his people. ["Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (*Acts 9:4*).] We have a work to do - in which Christ shares. (Compare *Rev. 6:9-11*)

church. ²⁵And I have been made a servant of the church by God, who gave me this task to perform for your good. It is the task of fully proclaiming his message, ²⁶which is the secret he hid through all past ages from all mankind, but has now revealed to his people. ²⁷God's plan is this: to make known his secret to his people, this rich and glorious secret which he has for all peoples. And the secret is this: Christ is in you, which means that you will share the glory of God. ²⁸So we preach Christ to all men. We warn and teach everyone, with all possible wisdom, in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature individual in union with Christ. ²⁹To get this done I toil and struggle, using the mighty strength that Christ supplies, which is at work in me.

2 Let me tell you how hard I have worked for you, and for the people in Laodicea, and for all those who do not know me personally. ²I do so that their hearts may be filled with courage, and that they may be drawn together in love and have the full wealth of assurance which true understanding brings. And so they will know God's

church. I have become its ²⁵ servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that ²⁶ has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to ²⁷ make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We proclaim him, coun- ²⁸ selling and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I ²⁹ labor, struggling with all the energy he so powerfully works in me.

2 I want you to know how strenuously I am exerting myself for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. My purpose is that ² they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of

25. Who gave me this task. God himself made Paul a servant of the church of Christ. In becoming a servant, Paul received an obligation (*Eph. 3:2*). He was to *live* God's message himself, and, to *take* it to everybody in the world.

26. Which is the secret. See *1 Cor. 2:9*. God revealed himself in past ages, but his final and complete revelation in Jesus Christ was kept secret, even though it was "hinted at" through the prophets.

27. God's plan is this. To make known his secret in and through Christ. **And the secret is this.** Christ living in the "people of God" [through the Spirit (*Eph. 2:22; Rom. 8:9-11*)].

28. So we preach Christ to all men. God's call is to everyone (*John 6:45*). Jesus sent his followers to "all peoples everywhere." **In order to bring.** Those who are set free from sin by their union to Christ, and indoctrinated with Truth, will be approved by God.

29. To get this done. We call on the grace of Christ to help us get the job done. See *Heb. 4:16*. Jesus uses the "hands" of the "people of God" to carry out his mission of bringing men and women to himself.

1. Let me tell you. Paul speaks about the persecutions he has suffered because of preaching the gospel, especially his two years imprisonment at Caesarea (*Acts 24:27*), and his imprisonment at Rome as he writes this letter (*Acts 28:30-31*). No one knows for sure that Paul planted the churches here, but *MacKnight* believes that the churches at Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis were planted by him, with the help of Timothy [and perhaps Epaphras].

2. That they may be drawn together. That both Jews and Gentiles will become "one" in Christ - formed into one church. **God's secret.** "By means of the gospel the Gentiles have a part with the Jews in God's blessings." (*Eph. 3:6*). [*See Col. 1:26-27*]

secret, which is Christ himself. ³He is the key that opens all the hidden treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge.

⁴I tell you, then, do not let anyone fool you with false arguments, no matter how good they seem to be. ⁵For even though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I am glad as I see the resolute firmness with which you stand together in your faith in Christ.

Fulness of Life in Christ

⁶Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. ⁷Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become ever stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving.

⁸See to it, then, that no one makes a captive of you with the worthless deceit of human wisdom, which comes from the teachings handed down by men, and from the ruling spirits of the universe, and not from Christ. ⁹For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his

God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Freedom From Human Regulations Through Life With Christ

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in

3. **He is the key.** Angels are not the key (as the false teachers were saying). Jesus is the key to God's wisdom, and he is himself the wisdom of God (*Col. 1:19*). See *Matt. 11:27*.

4. **Do not let anyone fool you.** If they had "true understanding" (*verse 2*) this would not be possible. Knowledge is a strong defense against false teachers.

5. **Yet I am with you in spirit.** Through the interest he had in them, and the things Epaphras had told him (*Col. 1:7*). **You stand together.** God's act in Christ to save men formed the basis for the faith which caused them to stand together.

6. **Since you have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord.** Accepted him as the visible likeness of the invisible God, the creator of all things, the head [teacher and ruler] of the church which is his body; and have been saved by his death and his mediation. **Live in union with him.** Don't abandon him for angels or the Law.

7. **Keep your roots deep in him.** Your life grows out of him like a tree from the earth. Read what Jesus said about the "Real Vine" in *John 15:1-17*. **As you were taught.** By Paul and his helpers.

8. **See to it, then, that no one makes a captive of you.** By letting the false teachers talk them into worshipping angels and saying they should not eat meat. He says more about this in *verses 16-18*. **Teachings handed down, etc.** Jewish tradition about angels was almost the same as what the Platonists taught about demons. Compare *Gal. 4:3*.

9. **For the full content.** Jesus is God (the Logos) in human form (*John 1:14*). He is both Son of Man and Son of God. [The Jews understood both titles to mean the same. See *Luke 22:69-70*.]

humanity, ¹⁰and you have been given full life in union with him. He is supreme over every spiritual ruler and authority.

¹¹In union with him you were circumcised, not with the circumcision that is made by men, but with Christ's own circumcision, which consists of being freed from the power of this sinful body.

¹²For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ through your faith in the active power of God, who raised him from death. ¹³You were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins, and because you were Gentiles without the Law. But God has now brought you to life with Christ; God forgave us all our sins. ¹⁴He canceled the unfavorable record of our debts, with its binding rules, and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And on that cross Christ freed himself from the power of the spiritual rulers and authorities; he made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in his victory procession.

¹⁶So let no one make rules about what you eat or drink, or about the subject of holy days, or the

bodily form, and you have ¹⁰this fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you ¹¹were also circumcised, in the putting off of your sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ. In bap- ¹²tism you were buried with him and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

When you were dead in ¹³your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled ¹⁴the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing ¹⁵it to the cross. And having ¹⁵disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Therefore do not let any- ¹⁶one judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration, or a sab-

10. **And you have been given full life in union with him.** No one could offer them more than they already had in Christ. See *1 Cor. 3:21-23*. **He is supreme.** Over angels and all creation!

11. **In union with him.** Some were saying every Christian must be circumcised. But this had already been rejected by the Holy Spirit [*Acts 15:1-29*]. Christ's own circumcision is spiritual.

12. **For when you were baptized.** Note that he identifies "being freed from the power of this sinful body" with baptism. Baptism is contrasted with the circumcision made by men. **You were buried with Christ.** Paul teaches we must act out the events of the Cross (*Rom. 6:3-4*). See also *Gal. 2:19-20; Eph. 2:4-6*. We die with him, are buried with him, rise with him, and rule with him.

13. **You were at one time.** To be dead because of sins is to be without spiritual or eternal life. **But God has now.** Through the gospel (*Rom. 1:16-17*). This is God's offer to forgive (*Acts 2:38*).

14. **He canceled.** The Law of Jewish rites. The Law was a curse because no one could keep it (see *James 2:10; Acts 15:10*). **Nailing it to the Cross.** Jesus canceled the Law by fulfilling it for us (*Rom. 8:3-4*). Those who nailed Jesus to the Cross effectively destroyed the Law by that act. The blood of the New Covenant poured out from the wounds made by the nails.

15. **And on that Cross.** He conquered the evil angels and the Devil and all his powers. See *John 12:31; 16:11*.

16. **So let no one make rules.** Since the Law was canceled, no one may force the Christian to keep its ritual and rites. **What you eat.** Jewish dietary rules (see *Lev. 7:10-27*) would not permit some foods. Some gentiles thought it was wrong to eat meat (*Rom. 14:2*). See also *1 Cor. 8:8; Heb. 9:10*. **Holy days.**

new moon festival, or the Sabbath. ¹⁷All such things are only a shadow of things in the future; the reality is Christ. ¹⁸Do not allow yourselves to be condemned by anyone who claims to be superior because of special visions, and insists on false humility and the worship of angels. Such a person is all puffed up, for no reason at all, by his human way of thinking, ¹⁹and has stopped holding on to Christ, who is the head. Under Christ's control the whole body is nourished and held together by its joints and ligaments, and grows as God wants it to grow.

Dying and Living with Christ

²⁰You have died with Christ and are set free from the ruling spirits of the universe. Why, then, do you live as though you belonged to this world? Why do you obey such rules as ²¹"Don't handle this," "Don't taste that," "Don't touch the other"? ²²All these things become useless, once they are used. They are only man-made rules and

bath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

If you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and

The Jewish holy days. **New moon festival.** The monthly Jewish rite (*Num. 28:11*). **Sabbath.** The Sabbath day [Saturday] was canceled along with the Law. It was a special symbol (*Exod. 31:13-17*). Sunday is the Lord's Day, but it was not "set apart" like the Jewish Sabbath.

17. **All such things.** The Jewish ritual looked forward to Christ. Christ is the reality; and his body, the church, is made up of those made free by Truth.

18-19. **Do not allow yourselves.** If you are *condemned*, you lose your reward. Do not allow any teacher to lead you away from Christ. Jesus is real! The special visions; the false humility (*Mark 12:38*); and the worship of angels; - are fake! The worship of angels, or any human being, living or dead, - is forbidden (*see Rev. 19:10*). **Such a person is all puffed up.** The teacher who tells you to follow these rules which will condemn you, has begun to think his "knowledge" is more important than Christ's death and resurrection. **Under Christ's control.** Christ is the Head of the body - his church. *See Eph. 4:16.* He is the source of the body's life and growth.

20-21. **You have died with Christ.** You died with Christ in your act of baptism (*verse 12*) and became free from the Law and human wisdom (*verse 8*). **Ruling Spirits of the universe.** This sometimes means the Jewish rites (*Gal. 4:3*). It is implied that angels rule this world, and that forbidding marriage and the eating of meat and making rules about such things comes from them. [These would have to be bad angels.] **Why do you obey such rules?** "Don't handle this," "Don't taste that," "Don't touch the other," are the rules of the false teachers, which Paul says belong to this world, not to Christ. Christians do not belong to this world, therefore they do not obey the obsolete rites mentioned in this chapter [as a religious act].

22. **All these things.** What you eat or drink. God did not make the rules these false teachers are forcing on the Colossian Christians. [*See verse 14*].

teachings. ²³Of course they appear to have wisdom in their forced worship of angels, and false humility, and severe treatment of the body; but they have no real value in controlling physical passions.

teachings. Such regulations ²³ indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

3 You have been raised to life with Christ. Set your hearts, then, on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. ²Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴Your real life is Christ, and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!

Rules for Holy Living

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

The Old Life and the New

⁵You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you, such as immorality, indecency, lust, evil passions, and greed (for greediness is a form of idol worship). ⁶Because of such things God's wrath will come upon those

23. **But they have no real value.** The ritual and austerity of these false rules seems wise. But these things are no help at all in controlling the problem of sin. In fact, the ritual and the austerity make the person "puffed up" with his own pride.

1. **You have been raised to life with Christ.** The result of a definite act (*Col. 2:12*). In their baptism they were "buried with Christ," and "raised with Christ." **Set your hearts.** The Christian is a citizen of the heavenly world. See *Phil. 3:20; Eph. 4:8*.

2. **Keep your minds fixed on things there.** To keep your values and motives correct, and to keep from losing sight of your goal - which is union with God in Eternity.

3. **Your life is hidden.** People hide money and jewels to keep them safe. The Christian's life is safe with God, and will be given to them in the Resurrection.

4. **When he appears.** A tree in winter is not dead even though the life is hidden. In the Second Coming of Christ, the Christian's real life will show itself. Compare *1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:19*.

5. **You must put to death.** Those vicious appetites and passions that are common to humanity. **Immorality.** Any sex act with another person - *other than* between husband and wife. See *Rom. 1:26-27*. **Indecency.** Antisocial behavior. [Peeping-Tom; indecent exposure; etc.] **Lust.** Here it means homosexuality [both male and female versions]. **Evil passions.** Dirty talk, drunkenness, and in general those things which are contrary to Christian motives. **Greed.** This speaks of one who thinks only of his money and power, making these things his "god." It is the *love* of money which is wrong (*1 Tim. 6:10*).

6. **Because of such things.** In the past, God destroyed nations and cities for such sins. In the Judgment, God's wrath will come on those who do such things (*Rom. 1:18*).

who do not obey him. ⁷And you yourselves at one time used to live according to such desires, when your life was dominated by them.

⁸But now you must get rid of all these things: anger, passion, and hateful feelings. No insults or obscene talk must ever come from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to one another, because you have put off the old self with its habits, ¹⁰and have put on the new self. This is the new man which God, its creator, is constantly renewing in his own image, to bring you to a full knowledge of himself. ¹¹As a result, there are no Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, or free men, but Christ is all, Christ is in all.

¹²You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Be helpful to one another, and forgive one another, whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive each other in the same way that the Lord has forgiven you. ¹⁴And to all these add love, which

You used to walk in these 7 ways, in the life you once 8 lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, 9 slander, filthy language. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and 10 have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no 11 Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Therefore, as God's chosen 12 people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each 13 other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues 14 put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

7. **And you yourselves at one time.** This was the way they used to live before they knew Christ. See *1 Cor. 6:9-11*. The whole Gentile world was living this way (see *1 Peter 4:3-5*).

8. **But now.** Get rid of all the sins mentioned, and the ones which follow. In their baptism they got rid of the "old man," and in their union with Christ, took on his qualities as a "new man" (*2 Cor. 5:17*).

9. **Do not lie.** Lying would be proof that they had not rid themselves of the "old man." See *Rom. 6:6*; [Holy living is a battle (*1 Cor. 9:25-27*).]

10. **This is the new man.** Those born of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*) become new in Christ and "march to a different drummer" (*Eph. 4:24*). **Constantly renewing.** Growing, maturing (see *Heb. 6:1-3*; *Eph. 4:12-16*).

11. **As a result.** Differences of race, national origin, social status, etc., lose their meaning in the one who dies to the world and becomes united with Christ. No one is excluded from the blessings that come by being a "new man" in Christ.

12. **You are the people of God.** It is a paradox that the Christian is the one who chooses God, only to find that God has chosen him. Everyone without exception has the option to choose God (*John 6:45*). **So then.** One who chooses God must be holy in his life and actions.

13. **Be helpful . . . forgive.** Whether rich or poor, every Christian can follow the example of Christ. When we are helpful and forgiving, we bless ourselves. God will forgive us in the same way we forgive others (*Matt. 6:12*).

14. **And to all these add.** As you would put on a coat to keep out the cold wind. **Love.** AGAPE. This kind of love is not an emotion, but a deliberate act of decision. Love makes it easy to be helpful and to forgive.

binds all things together in perfect unity. ¹⁵The peace that Christ gives is to be the judge in your hearts; for to this peace God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Christ's message, in all its richness, must live in your hearts. Teach and instruct each other with all wisdom. Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing to God, with thanksgiving in your hearts. ¹⁷Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father.

Personal Relations in the New Life

¹⁸Wives, be obedient to your husbands, for that is what you should do as Christians.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

²⁰Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents always, for that is what pleases God.

²¹Parents, do not irritate your children, so that they will become discouraged.

Let the peace of Christ ¹⁵ rule in your hearts, since, as members of one body, you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of ¹⁶ Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and counsel one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you ¹⁷ do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Rules for Christian Households

Wives, submit to your ¹⁸ husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives ¹⁹ and do not be harsh with them.

Children, obey your par- ²⁰ ents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not embitter ²¹ your children, or they will become discouraged.

15. **The peace that Christ gives.** This is not "freedom from problems," but the "hope of happiness." God calls both Jew and Gentile into *one body* - the church of Christ [the messianic community] - and gives them *hope*. Compare *Gal. 5:22-26*.

16. **Christ's message.** The gospel which Paul had preached to them. **Teach and instruct.** Those who immerse themselves in God's word to learn his message, will be able to teach others this Truth. **Sing.** Christianity is uniquely a singing religion. Songs are used to praise God, to teach and to instruct. *Psalms* - such as the Psalms of David. *Hymns* - songs of praise. *Sacred songs* - which have a spiritual theme. **Sing to God.** Our first purpose is to worship and honor God our Father and Jesus Christ. Our second purpose is to teach and instruct. Compare *Eph. 5:19-20*.

17. **Everything you do or say.** Honor God with your whole life! See *Rom. 12:1-2*. "In the name of Jesus" means to use his principles to guide your life.

18. **Wives.** Wives are to cooperate with their own husbands, whether Christian or not. [See *1 Cor. 7:12-16*.] The apostle commands wives to obey their [own] husbands, and husbands to love their [own] wives. It seems these are the greatest areas of need, due to the differing psychology between men and women.

19. **Husbands.** Love your wives as Christ loves his church (*Eph. 5:25*).

20. **Children.** It is normal for children to rebel against their parents, yet they must obey them, since they need to be guided and helped to take their place in life. Tests have shown that even very poor training is much better than none at all. [This does not mean to *sin* when asked.]

21. **Parents.** It is easy to be harsh and punish children more severely than ought to be done. This may make them bitter and cause them to hate.

²²Slaves, obey your human masters in all things, and do it not only when they are watching you, just to gain their approval, but do it with a sincere heart, because of your reverence for the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord, and not for men. ²⁴Remember that the Lord will reward you; you will receive what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve. ²⁵And the wrongdoer, whoever he is, will be paid for the wrong things he does; for God judges everyone by the same standard.

4 Masters, be right and fair in the way you treat your slaves. Remember that you too have a Master in heaven.

Instructions

²Be persistent in prayer, and keep alert as you pray, with thanks to God. ³At the same time pray also for us, so that God will give us a good opportunity to preach his message, to tell the secret of

Slaves, obey your masters ²² in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that ²⁴ you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. ²⁵

4 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Further Instructions

Devote yourselves to pray- ² er, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, ³ too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which

22. Slaves. Half the world were slaves in the first century. Christianity took the sting out of slavery, and finally brought an end to it. Both the slave and the servant had the same duties. It was their Christian obligation to do their work well, since this would honor their high calling in Christ.

23. Whatever you do. Christ gives dignity to human work and toil. We should fulfill our obligations to honor God.

24. For Christ is the real Master you serve. Every man is to us "Christ by proxy." See *Matt. 25:31-46*. [Note that these have done either good or bad to Christ by proxy.]

25. And the wrongdoer. There is no excuse for failing to do your part. [But God expects *love* to be your motive (*1 John 4:18*).]

1. Masters. This is part of the thought in the previous chapter. Slave owners, foremen, managers, etc., are to be fair with those they have authority over, and treat them like human beings. The whole world and everything in it changes for the one who is in Christ!

2. Be persistent in prayer. Make prayer a regular habit (see *Luke 18:1; Acts 1:14; Eph. 6:18*). God knows our prayer (*Rev. 8:3-4*). **Keep alert.** Examine your motives (*James 4:3*). Also, prayer is not a "substitute" for action (*Matt. 25:1-13*). **With thanks to God.** Let your *thanks* rise up to God like the "sweet smell of incense" (*Rev. 5:8*).

3. Pray also for us. Ask God to give a good opportunity to preach Christ! Note the spirit of this. **To tell the secret of Christ.** The Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free! It was a secret until it was revealed. (See *1 Cor. 2:6-10; 4:1; Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:26; 2:2*.) **In prison.** See notes on *Eph. 6:20; Phil. 1:7*.

Christ. For that is why I am now in prison. ⁴Pray, then, that I may speak in such a way as to make it clear, as I should.

⁵Be wise in the way you act toward those who are not believers, making good use of every opportunity you have. ⁶Your speech should always be pleasant and interesting, and you should know how to give the right answer to everyone.

Final Greetings

⁷Our dear brother Tychicus, who is a faithful worker and fellow servant in the Lord's work, will give you all the news about me. ⁸That is why I am sending him to you, to cheer you up by telling you how all of us are getting along. ⁹With him goes Onesimus, the dear and faithful brother, who belongs to your group. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

¹⁰Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have already received instructions about him, to welcome him if he comes your

I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Final Greetings

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to

4. **To make it clear.** Paul had to speak to be understood (compare *1 Cor. 14:19*) to show people how to be set free from their sins.

5. **Be wise.** Do not deliberately bring persecution on yourselves. Use every opportunity to honor God with your life by doing good to others.

6. **Your speech.** You can drive people away by your talk. Be pleasant and interesting, so you can say a good word for Christ to others. **The right answer.** Present the Truth in the best way (see *1 Cor. 9:19-23*). And, *know* what you are talking about!

7. **Our dear brother Tychicus.** See *Eph. 6:21* for note on Tychicus. Letters had to be carried privately by messengers, since they had no postal system such as we have. This man was one of Paul's most trusted associates (*Acts 20:4; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12*). He delivered this letter from Paul to the Colossians and the letter to the Ephesians at the same time.

8. **That is why I am sending him to you.** Tychicus was to deliver the letters to the churches and also to work to strengthen them. He was an "evangelist" (see note on *Eph. 4:11*).

9. **With him goes Onesimus.** He is the runaway slave mentioned in the letter to Philemon. Colossae was his home, and he is returning to Philemon as a "Christian brother." Tychicus must have delivered the letter to Philemon at this same time.

10. **Aristarchus.** One of Paul's associates. He was from Thessalonica (*Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2*). He is mentioned in *Philemon 24*. **Mark.** He was with Paul and Barnabas on the first tour of missions (*Acts 13:5*). Some think the death of Barnabas is implied in John Mark being with Paul at this time. **To welcome him.** There may have been some doubt about Mark because of his previous failure (*Acts 15:37-38*), but he had since demonstrated his faith, and Paul places his seal of approval on him.

way.) ¹¹Joshua, called Justus, also sends greetings. These three are the only Jewish converts who work with me for the Kingdom of God, and they have been a great help to me.

¹²Greetings from Epaphras, another member of your group, and a servant of Christ Jesus. He always prays fervently for you, asking God to make you stand firm, mature, and fully convinced, in complete obedience to his will. ¹³I can personally testify to his hard work for you, and for the people in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

¹⁴Luke, our dear doctor, and Demas send you their greetings.

¹⁵Give our best wishes to the brothers in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶After you read this letter, make sure that it is read also in the church at Laodicea. At the same time, you are to read the

you, welcome him.) Jesus, 11
 who is called Justus, also
 sends greetings. These are
 the only Jews among my
 fellow workers for the king-
 dom of God, and they have
 proved a comfort to me. 12
 Epaphras, who is one of you
 and a servant of Christ Jesus,
 sends greetings. He is always
 wrestling in prayer for you,
 that you may stand firm in
 all the will of God, mature
 and fully assured. I vouch 13
 for him that he is working
 hard for you and for those
 at Laodicea and Hierapolis.
 Our dear friend Luke, the 14
 doctor, and Demas send
 greetings. Give my greetings 15
 to the brothers at Laodicea,
 and to Nympha and the
 church in her house.

After this letter has been 16
 read to you, see that it is also
 read in the church of the
 Laodiceans and that you in
 turn read the letter from
 Laodicea.

11. **Joshua called Justus.** Only mentioned here. [Jesus and Joshua are the same name in Hebrew.] Most of the "evangelists" who worked with Paul must have been Gentiles, but this man was probably a Roman Jew.

12. **Greetings from Epaphras.** See *Col. 1:7*. He may have helped begin the church at Colossae, and was a member there. **Prays fervently for you.** Even though far away, he works for them through prayer. [This strongly implies the power of prayer.]

13. **His hard work.** Epaphras felt an obligation toward the churches at Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea. He may have helped begin them, and had been their teacher.

14. **Luke.** Luke was a doctor of medicine and also a historian (*Luke 1:1-4*). He was a Gentile. **Demas.** One of Paul's associates, perhaps the one who "wrote down" this letter of Paul's. He is mentioned favorably in *Philemon 24*, but seems to have "gone bad" (*2 Tim. 4:10*).

15. **Nympha.** [This name could belong to either a man or woman.] She was one of the Christians in Laodicea, and a "house-church" (which was separate from the main congregation) met in her home. Some large churches met in temples, etc., (*Acts 2:46*), but "house-churches" were also common (*Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Philemon 2*). [The church in Jerusalem may have had 100,000 members at its peak.]

16. **Make sure it is read also.** Paul intended that copies of his letters would be "passed around" between churches. The letter which Laodicea would send them was *Ephesians*.

letter Laodicea will send you. ¹⁷And tell Archippus, "Be sure to finish the task you were given in the Lord's service."

¹⁸With my own hand I write this: *Greetings from Paul*. Do not forget my chains!
May God's grace be with you.

Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

17. **And tell Archippus.** He was another of Paul's associates (*Philemon 2*). Some important mission had been assigned to him.

18. **With my own hand.** Paul dictated his letters to a helper (*Rom. 16:22*), but often added a few words in his own handwriting (*Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17; 1 Cor. 16:21*). **Do not forget my chains.** He mentions his being in prison three times in this chapter (*verses 3, 10, 18*). His meaning is: "Be willing to spend yourself for Christ." (Compare *2 Cor. 12:15*)

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

The history given in the Book of Acts shows Paul crossing into Europe, as he delivers the decree of the Jerusalem council to the churches of Asia Minor (*Acts 16:4*). God called Paul to preach in Macedonia (*Acts 16:9-10*). It must have been 51 or 52 A.D., when Paul planted the church in Thessalonica, on his second tour of missions. Johnson says this letter is the earliest written of the letters of Paul preserved in the New Testament, at least five or six years earlier than Romans, Galatians, and the Corinthian letters. Some think Paul was only in Thessalonica briefly, while others think *Phil. 4:16* implies a longer stay. However, Paul was forced to leave before he had finished all he felt he needed to do (*Acts 17:5-10; 1 Thess. 2:18*). This letter was probably written about a year after Paul planted the church there, toward the close of 52 A.D., or the first part of 53 A.D. He wrote during the early part of his work at Corinth [not from Athens, as some copyist added].

When he was forced to escape from Thessalonica, he went to Berea (*Acts 17:10*), about 50 miles to the west. Again he was forced to escape (*Acts 17:14*), this time to Athens, but leaving Silas and Timothy in Berea. When Timothy came to Paul at Athens, he was immediately sent back to Thessalonica (*1 Thess. 3:1-2*). Later, then, Timothy met Paul at Corinth and gave the report about the Thessalonian Christians (*1 Thess. 3:6; Acts 18:1-5*).

Paul's preaching emphasized "Jesus and the resurrection" (*Acts 17:18*). But he had not had time to explain completely. He had evidently given them spiritual gifts [which would create "instant maturity"], but those who had the gift of "prophecy" [the miraculous ability to teach God's word,

as now in written form as the New Testament] were being ignored (*1 Thess. 5:19-20*). This failure to allow themselves to be taught the Truth, caused them to have a distorted view of Christ's Second Coming, and to think the dead would not share in Eternity (*1 Thess. 4:13-18*). They were being severely persecuted, and needed help to endure this (*1 Thess. 2:14; 3:2-4*). There was also the danger of returning to their old sinful ways (*1 Thess. 4:4-8*).

But in spite of all this, the church at Thessalonica was in satisfactory condition, and maintained a good relationship with Paul. They were a "good example" to other believers, and Thessalonica became an important center for spreading the Good News of Christ (*1 Thess. 1:7-10*).

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

1 From Paul, Silas, and Timothy—
To the people of the church in Thessalonica,
who belong to God the Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ:

May grace and peace be yours.

The Life and Faith of the Thessalonians

²We always thank God for you all, and always mention you in our prayers. ³For we remember before our God and Father how you put your faith into practice, how your love made you work so hard, and how your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ is firm. ⁴We know, brothers, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own. ⁵For we brought the Good News to you, not with words only, but also with power and the Holy Spirit, and with complete conviction of its truth.

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy,
To the Church of the
Thessalonians, who are in
God the Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith

We always thank God for
all of you, mentioning you
in our prayers. We continually
remember before our
God and Father your work
produced by faith, your
labor prompted by love, and
your endurance inspired by
hope in our Lord Jesus
Christ.

Brothers loved by God, we
know that he has chosen
you, because our gospel
came to you not simply with
words, but also with power,
with the Holy Spirit and with

1. **From Paul, Silas, and Timothy.** Paul took both Silas and Timothy with him on the second tour of missions (*Acts ch. 15, 16, 17, 18*). **To the people of the church.** The "messianic community," visibly separate from the synagogue of the Jews. **Who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** The Father is honored only through the Son (*1 John 2:23*). The church belongs to both the Father and the Son. The church is visibly separate from both the Gentiles and the Jews.

2. **We.** This is Paul's letter, not the work of all three. But in "we" Paul is including all who are with him, and perhaps the Christian ministry as well. **Always thank God.** Almost all of Paul's letters begin with "thanks." This teaches us that Christians should pray for each other and thank God for the faith of others. (*Phil. 1:3-5*)

3. **For we remember.** Remembering these good things was a habit. **How you put your faith into practice.** Faith itself is a good work (*John 6:29*). **How your love made you work so hard.** This implies working hard at material things in order to be able to help others (compare *Eph. 4:28; Gal. 6:1-10*). **And how your hope.** "Hope" in the Bible, is "something we expect to see take place." Hope is important, since we act on the basis of what we do believe (compare *Rom. 2:7*).

4. **And has chosen you.** This is another way of saying, "and you know that you have become Christians." It is a paradox that we hear: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!" and find out the call is to ALL (*John 6:44-45*). But when we have come into union with him, we find that he has chosen us! God's call must be understood as Peter says in *2 Pet. 1:10* "So then, my brothers, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience; if you do so, you will never fall away."

5. **Not with words only.** Note that the "power" refers to the ones who brought the Good News. The reasons why they are "chosen" are: (1) the power and conviction with which Paul, Silas, and Timothy

You know how we lived when we were with you; it was for your own good. ⁶You imitated us and the Lord; and even though you suffered much, you received the message with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. ⁷So you became an example to all believers in Macedonia and Greece. ⁸For the message about the Lord went out from you not only to Macedonia and Greece, but the news of your faith in God has gone everywhere. There is nothing, then, that we need to say. ⁹All those people speak of how you received us when we visited you, and how you turned away from idols to God, to serve the true and living God ¹⁰and to wait for his Son to come from heaven—his Son Jesus, whom he raised from death, and who rescues us from God's wrath that is to come.

deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

brought this Good News to them; (2) the fact that they received the Good News with joy. **You know how we lived.** Paul points to the power, the Holy Spirit, and complete conviction of truth as it is clearly seen in the lives of himself and his associates. This, he says, is proof that God loves you and has chosen you. [God backed up the apostles with miracles (*Acts 19:11-12*). However, some think these things ended when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.]

6. **You imitated us.** They imitated the Christian life they saw Paul and others living. **Even though you suffered much.** From the unbelieving Jews (*Acts 17:1-9*). **From the Holy Spirit.** Joy, from the moment they accepted the gospel (see note on *Acts 2:38*).

7. **So you became an example.** They honored Christ with their lives! This made them a good example to other believers. **Macedonia.** See map. This was "Northern Greece," and Thessalonica was its capital. **Greece.** This was "Southern Greece" (Achaia), and Corinth was its capital. Both were Roman provinces.

8-10. **Went out from you.** Thessalonica became an important center for spreading the Good News. The effect of Christ on the Thessalonians created great interest among others. **That we need to say.** Wherever he went, he found the news of the church in Thessalonica was already well known! **And how you turned away from idols to God.** For a Gentile to accept Christ, he had to turn away from the worship of idols, reject a large part of his native society, clean up his life (*1 Pet. 4:3-5*), and *disbelieve* most of what he had been taught was true. (Compare *1 Cor. 1:26-31*.) **And to wait for his Son.** The apostles had seen Jesus ascend to heaven. Since no one could know the time of his return, they waited expectantly! Note that Paul's preaching centered around *Jesus and the resurrection* (*Acts 17:18*). We should always be prepared for his *coming!* [Some think even the apostles thought Jesus would come while they were still alive. However, it is clear that Paul expected a final rebellion before Jesus would Come Again (*2 Thess. 2:3*). This implies the apostles knew that it would be some time until Christ returns.]

Paul's Work in Thessalonica

2 You yourselves know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. ²You know how we had already been mistreated and insulted in Philippi before we came to you in Thessalonica. Yet our God gave us courage to tell you the Good News that comes from him, even though there was much opposition. ³The appeal we make to you is not based on error or impure motives, nor do we try to trick anyone. ⁴Instead, we always speak as God wants us to, because he approved us and entrusted the Good News to us. We do not try to please men, but to please God, who tests our motives. ⁵You know very well that we did not come to you with flattering talk, nor did we use words to cover up greed—God is our witness! ⁶We did not try to get praise from anyone, either from you or from others, ⁷even though we could have made demands on you as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle when we were with you, as gentle as a mother taking care of her

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

2 You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.

1. **Was not a failure.** The strong church Paul had planted there was proof of success!

2. **Mistreated and insulted in Philippi.** *Acts 16:19-24.* Yet our God gave us courage. They honored God by being courageous in the face of danger and opposition (*Phil. 4:13*). **Much opposition.** A certain group of Jews made it their purpose in life, to oppose the spread of the Good News (see *Acts 17:13*). This opposition *demonstrated* the faith of the Christians!

3. **The appeal we make to you.** Many people define faith as: "*something you believe, even though you know it isn't true.*" The Good News of Christ is based upon **EVIDENCE!** Paul makes it plain that they do not preach this message through greed, a desire for power, or to trick people. The Good News is that God has acted in Jesus Christ to set men free from their sins and give them eternal life!

4. **We always speak as God wants us to.** They were carrying out a mission for God. He would judge their motives. Therefore, they did not make any attempt to please men.

5. **That we did not come to you.** They knew Paul had not used flattering talk to trick them, nor did he try to hide bad motives under a lot of smooth words.

6. **We did not try to get praise.** Those who opposed the Good News tried to find some hidden motive to explain the unselfish dedication of the apostles. When obviously it was not power and money, they then said it must be to "get praise" for themselves (but see *1 Cor. 4:9-10*).

7. **Even though we could have.** It was their right to be supported by those they were bringing to Christ (*1 Cor. 9:1-7*). But he made a point of not doing this (*verse 9*).

children. ⁸Because of our love for you we were ready to share with you not only the Good News from God but even our own lives. You were so dear to us! ⁹Surely you remember, brothers, how we worked and toiled! We worked day and night so we would not be any trouble to you as we preached to you the Good News from God.

We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus. You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from

¹⁰You are our witnesses, and so is God: our conduct toward you who believe was pure, right, and without fault. ¹¹You know that we treated each one of you just as a father treats his own children. ¹²We encouraged you, we comforted you, and we kept urging you to live the kind of life that pleases God, who calls you to share his own Kingdom and glory.

¹³And for this other reason, also, we always give thanks to God. When we brought you God's message, you heard it and accepted it, not as man's message but as God's message, which indeed it is. For God is at work in you who believe. ¹⁴You, my brothers, had the same things happen to you that happened to the churches of God in Judea, to the people there who belong to Christ Jesus. You suffered the same persecutions from your own countrymen that they suffer-

8. We were ready to share with you. Love was the motive for all that Paul did. Love made him overcome obstacles to bring them the Good News, and he would have sacrificed his own life to do it (2 Cor. 12:15). He loves them as a mother loves her child!

9. We worked day and night. He worked with his own hands at a trade, to pay his own way, so that no one could accuse him of having money for a motive when he proclaimed the Good News. [But at other times and places, he took a salary (2 Cor. 11:8).]

10. You are our witnesses. They knew the truth of what Paul was saying.

11. Just as a father. Who teaches and guides his children for their own good and benefit.

12. Who calls you to share. This is God's offer through Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is visible on earth as the church (the messianic community). See Col. 1:13.

13. Not as man's message. They had received the Good News as being the teaching of God. Since people act on the basis of what they believe, God works in those who believe his message.

14. Had the same things happen to you. They "imitated" the Judean Christians by experiencing the same kind of persecutions. An element of "unbelieving Jews" began persecuting the church at Thessalonica and persuaded others to join in this (Acts 17:5).

ed from the Jews, ¹⁵who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and persecuted us. How displeasing they are to God! How hostile they are to all men! ¹⁶They even tried to stop us from preaching to the Gentiles the message that would bring them salvation. This is the last full measure of the sins they have always committed. And now God's wrath has at last fallen upon them!

Paul's Desire to Visit Them Again

¹⁷As for us, brothers, when we were separated from you for a little while—not in our thoughts, of course, but only in body—how we missed you and how hard we tried to see you again! ¹⁸We wanted to go back to you. I, Paul, tried to go back more than once, but Satan would not let us. ¹⁹After all, it is you—you, no less than others!—who are our hope, our joy, and our reason for boasting of our victory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes. ²⁰Indeed, you are our pride and our joy!

the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

Paul's Longing to See the Thessalonians

But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us. For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

15. **Who killed the Lord Jesus.** Not all the Jews, but a certain element was responsible for killing Jesus (*Matt. 27:25*). The false teachers here may have said that since the Jews, who were Jesus' own people, killed him and persecuted the apostles, this was proof that the Good News is false. But Paul points out the fact that they even killed their own prophets whom they admitted came from God! (*Acts 7:52-53; Matt. 23:31*) **How hostile they are to all men.** The Jewish leaders were especially noted for this, and even Josephus, the Jewish historian, mentions it. The Law of Moses commanded kindness to foreigners. But after the return from Babylon (where they had been held captive) they developed an "isolationism" which caused them to be openly hostile to everyone but their own group.

16. **They even tried to stop us.** The Christians at Thessalonica were mostly Gentiles. Nothing fanned the flames of hatred among this group of Jews, as did the preaching of the Good News to the Gentiles (*Acts 22:21-23*). **This is the last full measure of the sins.** Note this is their own act of free will. Jesus prophesied that God's wrath would fall on this group of people (*Matt. 23:35-36*). God's wrath did fall on them in many ways, but none so devastating as the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) which came in less than twenty years time from when Paul wrote this.

17. **How we missed you.** He had been forced to leave them (*Acts 17:10*).

18. **But Satan would not let us.** We are not told how, but some difficulties came up that Paul credits to Satan.

19. **After all, it is you.** Paul uses symbolism to show a timeless reality. The one who won the victory in the Games, was given a *crown* as a token. Paul points with pride to the Gentile churches as the *token* of his victory. When he stands before Christ the Judge, they will be his "reason for boasting." He says: **"Indeed, you are our pride and our joy!"** (See *Daniel 12:3*.)

3 Finally, we could not bear it any longer. So we decided to stay on alone in Athens ²while we sent Timothy, our brother who works with us for God in preaching the Good News about Christ. We sent him to strengthen you and help your faith, ³so that none of you should turn back because of these persecutions. You yourselves know that such persecutions are part of God's will for us. ⁴For while we were still with you, we told you ahead of time that we were going to be persecuted; and, as you well know, that is exactly what happened. ⁵That is why I had to send Timothy. I could not bear it any longer, so I sent him to find out about your faith. Surely it could not be that the Devil had tempted you, and all our work had been for nothing!

⁶Now Timothy has come back to us from you, and he has brought the welcome news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always think well of us, and that you want to see us just as much as we want to see you. ⁷So, in all our trouble and suffering we have been encouraged about you, brothers. It was your faith that

3 So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.

Timothy's Encouraging Report

But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith.

1. We could not bear it any longer. He felt like a father separated from his children. Satan had made it impossible for Paul to go to them (*1 Thess. 2:18*). So, he will stay in Athens and send someone else.

2. While we send Timothy. Whatever Satan was doing did not make it impossible for Timothy to go to assist and strengthen the church at Thessalonica.

3. So that none of you should turn back. Persecution placed terrific pressures on the Christian. "Turning back" to the world would eliminate these pressures, but bring God's wrath. **Such persecutions are part of God's will for us.** Compare *Matt. 10:34-39; Heb. 12:5-11*. The struggle is important! Remember: the unbelievable conditions before the Flood, produced eight righteous people (*1 Pet. 3:20*).

4. We told you ahead of time. He had prepared them for the persecution which would come. (Compare notes on *Rev. 6:3-6*.)

5. Surely it could not be. There was a real possibility the false teachers might succeed in convincing them that Paul really did not love them, and there was no reality to the salvation which Paul preached. Perhaps that's why Jesus said to make people his *disciples* (*Matt. 28:19-20*), and then to teach them to obey all he has commanded.

6. To us from you. Timothy met Paul at Corinth (*Acts 18:5*) with a good report. [This implies Paul wrote them from Corinth.]

7. We have been encouraged. He is filled with joy that they are faithful to Christ! (Compare *2 John 4*.)

encouraged us, ⁸because now we really live if you stand firm in your life in the Lord. ⁹Now we can give thanks to God for you. We thank him for the joy we have before our God because of you. ¹⁰Day and night we ask him with all our heart to let us see you personally and supply what is needed in your faith.

¹¹May our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, prepare the way for us to come to you! ¹²May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow more and more and become as great as our love for you. ¹³In this way he will make your hearts strong, and you will be perfect and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all who belong to him.

A Life that Pleases God

4 Finally, brothers, you learned from us how you should live in order to please God. This is, of course, the way you have been living. And now we beg and urge you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to do even more. ²For you know the instructions we gave you, by the authority of the

For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he give you inner strength that you may be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Living to Please God

4 Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. You know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

8. **Because now we really live.** This "good news" about their faith has given him "new life!" If you stand firm. This is really his confidence speaking, convinced they will go all the way with Christ.

9. **Now we can give thanks.** That is, how can we be thankful enough for our great spiritual joy which you have made possible by your faith!

10. **Day and night we ask him.** This shows how much he wanted to see this group of people who had heard the Good News from him. **And supply what is needed.** Just coming out of idol worship, they had much to learn about the One True God. Paul wanted to teach them more truth, so they could "go forward" to spiritual maturity (see *Heb. 6:1-3*).

11. **Prepare the way for us.** He appeals his case to God, asking that he may be allowed to visit them once more. He was allowed to do this (*Acts 20:1*), but it was three or four years later.

12. **Grow more and more.** Love is even more important than faith or hope (see *1 Cor. 13:13*). Whether he sees them again or not, he prays God will make their love grow!

13. **He will make your hearts strong.** Love makes us "unshakable!" See *Rom. 13:8*.

1. **Finally, brothers.** He says this to call their attention to what he is about to say. **How you should live.** The Gentile world was very wicked (see *1 Pet. 4:1-5*). One who lived a "Christian life" contrasted sharply with the world in which he lived. This is still true today.

2. **For you know the instructions we gave you.** Faith and actions cannot be divorced one from another (see *James 2:14-26*). After making people disciples of Christ, we are to teach them to obey everything Jesus has commanded.

Lord Jesus. ³This is God's will for you: he wants you to be holy and completely free from immorality. ⁴Each of you men should know how to take a wife in a holy and honorable way, ⁵not with a lustful desire, like the heathen who do not know God. ⁶In this matter, then, no man should do wrong to his brother or take advantage of him. We have told you this before, we strongly warned you, that the Lord will punish those who do such wrongs. ⁷God did not call us to live in immorality, but in holiness. ⁸So then, whoever rejects this teaching is not rejecting man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

⁹There is no need to write you about love for your fellow believers. You yourselves have been taught by God how you should love one another. ¹⁰And you have behaved in this way toward all the brothers in all of Macedonia. So we beg you,

It is God's will that you ³ should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you ⁴ should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter ⁵ no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not ⁶ call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he ⁷ who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, ⁸ who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Now about brotherly love ⁹ we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you ¹⁰ do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

3. **This is God's will for you.** Now he gives an example. "Immorality" was the *normal* way of life in the Gentile world. [Immorality means any sex act outside the marriage relationship: adultery, homosexual acts, etc.] The Gentiles did not consider immorality a sin.

4-5. **Each of you men should know how to take.** "To take" = ΚΤΑΣΘΗΑΙ "which can only mean 'to acquire,' not 'to possess.'" [Alford (Greek Testament)] Paul is advising marriage, as he does in *1 Cor. 7:2*. The Gentiles went either to the extreme of celibacy or else unrestrained lust. Women were treated as "disposable," and as "necessary evils." God himself decrees marriage is holy (*Gen. 2:18; Heb. 13:4; see notes on Matt. 19:4-5*). No Jewish High Priest would have believed marriage to be an unholy thing! [Paul speaks to men, but this would apply to women also.] **Not with a lustful desire.** "Lust" is obsessive desire outside the marriage relationship. Lust makes a poor standard to choose a prospective mate. God intended a man and woman to join for life in marriage. This is a holy bond, in which they fulfill each other's needs. Paul makes this plain in *1 Cor. 7:3-5*; and points out that celibacy is a special "gift" *1 Cor. 7:7*.

6. **No man should do wrong to his brother.** Paul is talking about adultery, and about stealing another man's wife. **The Lord will punish.** This shows the seriousness of this sin.

7. **But in holiness.** God sets standards of purity for his people, and calls them to live transformed lives (*Rom. 12:1-2*).

8. **Whoever rejects this teaching.** These are God's commands. God calls us to holy living. **Who gives you his Holy Spirit.** Read what Paul says in *1 Cor. 6:15-20*. We insult God when we defile our bodies with sin.

9. **Have been taught by God.** God teaches us to love our fellow believers. If we love them, we will not sin against them, or do things to destroy their faith. Read *1 John 4:19-21*.

10. **And you have behaved in this way.** Their lives showed this love for their fellow believers.

brothers, to do even more. ¹¹Make it your aim to live a quiet life, to mind your own business, and earn your own living, just as we told you before. ¹²In this way you will win the respect of those who are not believers, and will not have to depend on anyone for what you need.

The Lord's Coming

¹³Brothers, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope. ¹⁴We believe that Jesus died and rose again; so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have died believing in him.

¹⁵This is the Lord's teaching that we tell you: we who are alive on the day the Lord comes will not go ahead of those who have died. ¹⁶There will be the shout of command, the archangel's voice, the sound of God's trumpet, and the Lord himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first;

Make it your ambition to ¹¹ lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. ¹²

The Coming of the Lord

Brothers, we do not want ¹³ you to be ignorant about those who sleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe ¹⁴ that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who sleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For ¹⁵ the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will ¹⁶

11. **Make it your aim to live a quiet life.** Don't be a "busybody." It is implied that some at Thessalonica expected Jesus to come immediately, and so had quit working, and become loafers and troublemakers.

12. **You will win the respect.** It would be an insult to God if the unbelievers could say: "This new religion makes loafers and beggars out of men." **And will not have to depend.** There is a strong "work ethic" in Christianity. Paul wrote: "*The man who used to rob must stop robbing and start working, to earn an honest living for himself, and to be able to help the poor.*" (Eph. 4:28).

13. **We want you to know the truth.** What the apostle has said about "a life that pleases God" in the first part of the chapter, likely has something to do with their misunderstanding of Christ's Coming. Some part of the preaching of the Good News had been twisted into a "reason" why they should not live a quiet active life; and why they were sad about those believers who had died. **As are those who have no hope.** That is, as the heathen and those of the Jews who do not believe in a "raising from death." This shows their sadness had its roots in their belief that the dead would not share in Christ's heavenly kingdom.

14. **We believe.** His argument is: We believe that Jesus raised from death; *therefore*, we believe the dead will be raised through Christ when he Comes.

15. **This is the Lord's teaching.** He shows the authority of what he is saying. **Will not go ahead of.** Those who are living when our Lord Comes will not go into his presence before the dead are raised. [We also see that Paul (speaking by inspiration) says there will be Christians living when Jesus returns!]

16. **And the Lord himself will come down.** The signal for all this will be the archangel's shout of command, and the sound of God's trumpet blowing a blast. The Thessalonians must have believed the living Christians would rush to meet Jesus, but the dead would be unable to follow, and so would be left behind forever. **Will rise to life first.** Not "first before the other dead are raised," but "first - before the living are caught up." Compare Rev. 1:7.

¹⁷then we who are living at that time will all be gathered up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸So then, cheer each other up with these words.

Be Ready for the Lord's Coming

5 There is no need to write you, brothers, about the times and occasions when these things will happen. ²For you yourselves know very well that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief comes at night. ³When people say, "Everything is quiet and safe," then suddenly destruction will hit them! They will not escape—it will be like the pains that come upon a woman who is about to give birth. ⁴But you, brothers, are not in the darkness, and the Day should not

rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. 17 18

5 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 2 3

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a 4

17. Will all be gathered up. All of God's people since the beginning of time will be gathered up, as the dead rise to life and the living are changed (*1 Cor. 15:51-52*). **To meet the Lord in the air.** Nothing says Jesus will ever set foot on earth again. His people will rise to meet him! [Judgment will be a separation. See *Matt. 25:31-33*.] **And so we will always be with the Lord.** The Church Militant [the messianic community active on earth] will become the Church Triumphant [the messianic community in the eternal world - in God's presence]. The church of Christ does not TERMINATE, but is united with Christ as a bride to her husband, and the Wedding Feast continues forever without end (*Rev. 19:5-9*)!

18. Cheer each other up with these words. Tell those who are sad about their fellow believers having died, that when they are called to meet the Lord, they will find their own dead raised to life and in that happy crowd of the Redeemed!

1. About the times and occasions. A misunderstanding of the Second Coming was the basis for the problem at Thessalonica. Having shown that those who have died "in Christ" will be raised before the living are changed, Paul now proceeds to the punishment of the unbelievers. God has given Christ the right to judge the world (*Acts 17:31; Matt. 28:18*). This shows the Father has put his "stamp of approval" on the Good News, and authorized Christ to punish all who do not obey it (*2 Thess. 1:8-9*). However, notice the world is *already doomed*, and Christ offers a way to escape from it (*John 8:24*). Paul reminds them of what they already know [*that only the Father knows the time of the Second Coming (Matt. 24:36)*.]

2. Come as a thief comes. Sudden, unexpected! This can be understood of: the day of each person's death; the day of Jerusalem's destruction [which was still future as he wrote this]; the day of Christ's Second Coming at the end of the world.

3. When people say. Some think this means the signs which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem (*Matt. 24*) will NOT appear again just before the Second Coming. People will be saying: "everything is quiet and safe," and suddenly, Jesus will be here! No one will be ignorant of his Coming (*Rev. 1:7*).

4. The Day should not take you by surprise. Darkness is symbolic of ignorance. Christians are instructed in truth, and will not be caught unprepared. [If they obey *Heb. 6:1-3*.]

take you by surprise like a thief. ⁵All of you are people who belong to the light, who belong to the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶So then, we should not be sleeping, like the others; we should be awake and sober. ⁷It is at night when people sleep; it is at night when people get drunk. ⁸But we belong to the day, and we should be sober. We must wear faith and love as a breastplate, and our hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹God did not choose us to suffer his wrath, but to possess salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us in order that we might live together with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes. ¹¹For this reason encourage one another, and help one another, just as you are now doing.

thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore, ¹¹encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹²We beg you, brothers, to pay proper respect to those who work among you, those whom the Lord has chosen to guide and instruct you.

Final Instructions

Now we ask you, brothers, ¹²to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who

5. **Who belong to the light.** Light is symbolic of truth. Truth makes you free (*John 8:32*). People of the night or the darkness reject Truth.

6. **We should be awake and sober.** Christians must be alert to spiritual danger, and must live transformed lives (*see 1 Thess. 4:11-12; Luke 21:34-36*).

7. **It is at night.** People sleep at night. But also, people do things at night that would make them ashamed in the day. He means that the stupidity and lust of the world are appropriate for the darkness of ignorance in which they live.

8. **But we belong to the day.** The fact that he stresses this, may imply that some were not living this way. He uses the symbolism of a soldier's armor to emphasize what he is saying. **Faith and love.** As a *breastplate* to protect our "heart." **Hope of salvation.** As a *helmet* to protect our "head." The Christian's fight is against *wicked spiritual forces* (*Eph. 6:12*). (Compare *Eph. 6:13-18*.)

9. **To suffer his wrath.** God's act in Jesus Christ offers us a way to escape from the wrath which is to come! (*See Rev. 7:14-17*.)

10. **Who died for us.** This was Christ's deliberate act of free will to fulfill God's Plan (*John 10:17-19*). **Whether we are alive or dead.** Death cannot rob us of our salvation! We shall all be changed (*1 Cor. 15:51-52*).

11. **For this reason.** That is, because of God's promises to us. **Encourage.** Through faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, etc. (*2 Pet. 1:5-11*). **Help.** With the loads of life (*Gal. 6:1-5*).

12. **To those who work among you.** Preachers (*evangelists*, *see note on Eph. 4:11*) and church leaders (*elders or pastors*, *see note on Eph 4:11*). **To guide and instruct you.** Christianity is a teaching religion, "*On-the-job-training for Eternity!*" Evangelists and church leaders are to help each Christian to fulfill his or her individual ministry! [Christians are a *kingdom of priests* to God (*Rev. 1:6*).]

¹³Treat them with the greatest respect and love, because of the work they do. Be at peace among yourselves.

¹⁴We urge you brothers: warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with all.

¹⁵See that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but at all times make it your aim to do good to one another and to all people.

¹⁶Be joyful always, ¹⁷pray at all times, ¹⁸be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants of you, in your life in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; ²⁰do not despise inspired messages. ²¹Put all things to the test: keep what is good, ²²and avoid every kind of evil.

admonish you. Hold them in 13 the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And 14 we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays 15 back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be 16 joyful always; pray continu- 17 ally; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's 19 fire; do not treat prophecies 20 with contempt. Test every- 21 thing. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. 22

13. **Treat them.** Christians were not divided into "clergy" and "laity" at this time. They are to honor evangelists and church leaders because of the work they do. [Note what Christ said in *Luke 22:24-27*.]

14. **Warn the idle.** Those who want their own way about everything (see *James 4:1-4*). [These are some of the people mentioned in *1 Thess. 4:11-12*.] **Encourage the timid.** Those who are easily discouraged by the pressures and problems of life. **Help the weak.** Those weak in "the faith" [who still have much to learn]. **Be patient with all.** All who err through ignorance, just as God is patient with each of us. The duties in this verse apply especially to the church leaders (*who watch over your souls, Heb 13:17*), also to the evangelists (whose duties somewhat overlap), but also to every Christian. **WE ARE OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER!**

15. **See that no one pays back wrong for wrong.** See note on *Rom. 12:21*. "Actions speak louder than words."

16. **Be joyful always.** The Christianity which we see in the New Testament is not gloomy and sour. God's people are full of joy! They can be happy even when the world seems to frown! One who is united to Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*) has a source of joy and life not available to the world; a Savior who is always with him; and an eternal hope!

17. **Pray at all times.** That is, make a habit of prayer. See *Luke 18:1-8; Eph. 6:18*.

18. **Be thankful in all circumstances.** God gives "problem-opportunities." Every problem contains an opportunity; every opportunity contains a problem. Note this speaks to Christians (see *Rom. 8:28*).

19. **Do not restrain the Holy Spirit.** Do not resist him, or destroy his influence by failing to live a holy life. We restrain the Spirit when we disobey the word of God; when we rebel against those who guide and instruct us; when we suppress our own conscience.

20. **Do not despise inspired messages.** During the time when Paul wrote this, prophets were men inspired by God to speak his message. Yet each prophet was to be carefully tested (*1 John 4:1-3; 1 Cor. 12:1-3*). The content of God's revelation was closed with the last apostle, John. Paul calls God's curse on any who would change what has been revealed (*Gal. 1:8-9*). Spiritual life is nourished, not so much by new knowledge, as by things already known being taken out and looked at, and carefully studied.

21-22. **Put all things to the test.** Tradition is a collection of things which are accepted as being true, without examination. The Bible, especially the New Testament, is the "yardstick" by which to measure religious things. Paul says to examine everything you believe by using this "yardstick" of God. **Keep what is good.** Those which pass the test are "good," and should be kept. **And avoid every kind of evil.** Those which will not pass the test should be avoided.

²³May the God who gives us peace make you holy in every way, and keep your whole being, spirit, soul, and body, free from all fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you will do it, because he is faithful.

²⁵Pray also for us, brothers.

²⁶Greet all the brothers with a brotherly kiss.

²⁷I urge you, by the authority of the Lord, to read this letter to all the brothers.

²⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

23. **Make you holy in every way.** This is Paul's word of blessing on the Thessalonian Christians. But God will make each one of his people holy in every way [that is, those who follow *1 John 1:7*]. **And keep your whole being.** Man is "triune," just as is God. The "whole man" is *spirit, soul, and body*. [Note Paul's reasoning that the *body* will be raised from death (*1 Cor. 15:35-49*).]

24. **Because he is faithful.** God does not "go back" on his word. If you trust him [live in the light of his truth], he will *keep* you!

25. **Pray also for us.** Paul asks for prayers many times. See *Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1; compare James 5:16*.

26. **Greet all the brothers with a brotherly kiss.** In many parts of the world, a kiss is still the common form of greeting [we shake hands], as it was in New Testament times. (*See also Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20*.)

27. **By the authority of the Lord.** He places this obligation on them by the Lord's authority. The church leaders were to read this out loud to the entire congregation. Perhaps the "young" Christians at Thessalonica would not realize the importance of circulating this letter from Paul. This letter was to be circulated among all the churches (*implied in Col. 4:16*).

28. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.** This is his usual way of saying "good-by." He gives a final word of benediction.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

Paul wrote this letter from Corinth, not long after his first letter to the Thessalonians, probably near the close of 53 A.D. We have no way of knowing all that happened between the writing of the two letters. But Paul learned just how the church was progressing, and he saw some things which required immediate attention. Some things were no longer a problem, such as their fears about those who had died, and their possible weakening under persecution. But some were teaching that the Day of the Lord had already come (2 *Thess.* 2:2-3). Such speculation led some to be *lazy loafers*, and much of chapter 3 is directed toward that problem.

The purpose of this letter is to: (1) thank them and praise them for their faith; (2) to *inspire* them to continue to be strong in the faith; (3) to correct wrong ideas about the Day of the Lord; (4) to discipline the *lazy loafers* in the church, and to remind the church of its responsibilities toward such as these.

The Introduction to First Thessalonians gives more detail on the church and its planting.

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

1 From Paul, Silas, and Timothy—
1 To the people of the church in Thessalonica, who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

²May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

The Judgment at Christ's Coming

³We must thank God at all times for you, brothers. It is right for us to do so, because your faith is growing so much and the love each of you has for the others is becoming greater. ⁴That is why we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God. We boast about the way you continue to endure and believe, through all the persecutions and sufferings you are experiencing.

⁵Here is the proof of God's righteous judgment, because as a result of all this you will become worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering. ⁶God will do what is right: he will bring suffering on those who make you suffer,

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy,
1 To the church of the Thessalonians, who are in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you **2**
 from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

We ought always to thank **3**
 God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's **4**
 churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

All this is evidence that **5**
 God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will **6**
 pay back trouble to those

1-2. From Paul, Silas, and Timothy. See note on *1 Thess. 1:1*. The first two verses of this letter are much the same as the first verse of *1 Thessalonians*.

3-5. We must thank God at all times for you. In *1 Thess. 3:9-13*, Paul says he spoke to God *day and night* about them. Here he shows that his prayers were answered. Paul's messenger had come back with good news that made him happy. **Because your faith is growing so much.** This is part of the good news. Even though they were being persecuted, their faith kept growing and getting stronger. **The love each of you has for the others.** Their spiritual life was balanced. Along with stronger faith, their love was becoming greater as well (*1 John 4:17-18*). **That is why we ourselves boast.** Their spiritual progress made Paul feel like a "proud father." Hearing of other's successes spurs you on to greater things. **In the churches of God.** No one in the Bible ever used "church of God," "church of Christ," or any other name, to mean different KINDS of churches. The one and same *messianic community* is called: church of God; church of Christ; God's Household; the Family of God; Our Family in the Faith; Christ's body; The Kingdom of His Dear Son. Individual believers are called: Christians; Disciples; God's People; Brothers [this includes Sisters]; God's Children. **You continue to endure and believe.** They did not give up, but continued to live their life to please and honor Christ. **Here is the proof of God's righteous judgment.** A future judgment must come, because God is righteous. The wicked seem to have it all their way, and the righteous suffer. That's how this world is, but see the note on *Rev. 15:1*. **You will become worthy.** The things they suffer, and their faith and love, prepare them for Eternity.

6. God will do what is right. God will be *just* in paying back those who persecute his people.

⁷and he will give relief to you who suffer, and to us as well. He will do this when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven with his mighty angels, ⁸with a flaming fire, to punish those who do not know God and those who do not obey the Good News about our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from his glorious might, ¹⁰when he comes on that Day to receive glory from all his people and honor from all who believe. You too will be among them, because you have believed the message that we told you.

¹¹This is why we always pray for you. We ask our God to make you worthy of the life he called you to live. May he, by his power, fulfill all your desire for goodness and complete your work of faith. ¹²In this way the name of our Lord Jesus will receive glory from you, and you from him, by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ **And he will give relief to you.** God will be *just* in this as well! **He will do this when.** See notes on *Rev. 14:13; 22:11-12.*

⁸ **With a flaming fire.** Christ's Second Coming will mean brightness and glory to those who belong to Christ, but death and destruction to the ungodly (*see note on Jude 14-15*). This does not mean *annihilation*, but being *expelled eternally* from the presence of God (*Matt. 25:41,46*). **Who do not know God.** Who do not *want* to know God, and will not bring themselves to him! **Those who do not obey the Good News.** Those who rebel against God and will not reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ. Compare notes on *Acts 2:36-38*.

⁹ **They will suffer the punishment.** The human family is already under the sentence of death. Jesus offers a way to escape God's wrath! Those who refuse to escape, bring on themselves the consequences. See note on *verse 8*.

¹⁰ **When he comes on that Day.** Christ's Second Coming will be a time of jubilation for all those who belong to him! See notes on *Rev. 21:1-4*.

¹¹ **This is why we always pray for you.** Because of the *promise* God has for those who belong to Christ. **He called you to live.** See note on *Rev. 22:17*.

¹² **In this way.** Holy lives bring honor and glory to God! See notes on *Rom. 12:1-2*.

The Wicked One

2 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to be with him: I beg you, brothers, ²do not be so easily confused in your thinking or upset by the claim that the Day of the Lord has come. Perhaps this was said by someone prophesying, or by someone preaching. Or it may have been said that we wrote this in a letter. ³Do not let anyone fool you in any way. For the Day will not come until the final Rebellion takes place and the Wicked One appears, who is destined to hell. ⁴He will oppose everything which men worship and everything which men consider divine. He will put himself above them all, and even go in and sit down in God's temple and claim to be God.

⁵Don't you remember? I told you all this while

The Man of Lawlessness

2 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Don't you remember that when I was with you I used

1. **Concerning the coming.** He had written about this in his first letter to them. See the introduction to First Thessalonians.

2. **Do not be so easily confused.** They were not thinking things through with care. **Or upset by the claim.** Some had made the claim that the "countdown" for the end of the world had already begun. The Thessalonian church was afraid of what they thought was going to happen! **Perhaps this was said.** Someone had misunderstood [deliberately?] what Paul had said in his first letter to them. **That we wrote this in a letter.** It is strongly possible that a *forged letter* using Paul's name had been circulated, saying the Day of the Lord had come. See note on 2 *Thess.* 3:17.

3. **For the Day will not come until.** Paul had already told them about this (see verse 5). But no one has any way of knowing just what Paul said to them. **The final Rebellion takes place.** Protestant churchmen have traditionally identified this Rebellion as an *apostasy* to be identified with the Roman Church. But in verse 8 the appearance of the Wicked One and the Coming of the Lord Jesus seem very close in time. Verse 7 tells us the Mysterious Wickedness is already at work [over 1,900 years ago as Paul writes this]. I think the Mysterious Wickedness is to be identified with the *false prophet* (see *Rev. 13:11*); and the Wicked One and the final Rebellion to the time when Satan is *set loose for a little while* (see *Rev. 11:7; 20:7-10 and notes*).

4. **He will oppose everything which men worship.** *Lipscomb* says: "I doubt if any organization is 'the man of sin' [the Wicked One]. A principle was at work that would set aside God's order and establish one of its own in its stead. It leads to ruin and perdition [doom] - is called the son of perdition [that is, one destined to hell]." Whoever seizes the authority which belongs only to God, and substitutes their rules for God's laws (*Matt. 7:21-23; 15:9*), is guilty of this. The same principle shows itself in many forms during the history of the church. Some think Satan will concentrate all his effort through one man at the time when he is set loose for a short time. (See notes on verse 3.)

5. **Don't you remember?** No one has any way of knowing just what Paul did tell them. But it is very unlikely that he gave them any secret information. The New Testament gives us Paul's "*understanding of the secret of Christ*" (*Eph. 3:4*).

I was with you. ⁶Yet there is something that keeps this from happening now, and you know what it is. At the proper time, then, the Wicked One will appear. ⁷The Mysterious Wickedness is already at work, but what is going to happen will not happen until the one who holds it back is taken out of the way. ⁸Then the Wicked One will appear, and the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath from his mouth and destroy him with his glorious appearing, when he comes. ⁹The Wicked One will come with the power of Satan and perform all kinds of miracles and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰and use every kind of wicked deceit on those who will perish. They will perish because they did not welcome and love the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹For this reason God sends the power of error to work in them so that they believe what is false. ¹²The result is that all who have not believed the truth, but have taken pleasure in sin, will be condemned.

to tell you these things? And ⁶ now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at ⁷ work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the law- ⁸ less one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The ⁹ coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that ¹⁰ deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this ¹¹ reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemn- ¹² ed who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

6-7. Yet there is something that keeps this from happening now. They knew what it is [or was], because Paul had told them. *Johnson* thinks [along with many of the Christian fathers] that the "something" was the Roman Empire. *Lipscomb* [and many others] think it was Paul himself. The attitude which led people to *distort* the rules of God was already at work, but Paul used his influence and authority to prevent it from growing. When Paul died, this influence of *distortion* spread rapidly, as history shows. [Some think the chief-angel Michael and his army of angels will prevent the appearance of the Wicked One until Satan is set loose for a little while (see note on verse 3).]

8. Then the Wicked One will appear. When the one who holds back this Mysterious Wickedness is taken out of the way, the forces of change and distortion can take over. This may be the primary meaning here. But it must refer as well to the time when Satan is set loose for a little while, because in this verse, as the Wicked One appears, Jesus Comes and kills him. [This can be understood of the "cycle of Armageddon," and also the final Rebellion. See notes on *Rev. 11:7; 20:7-10.*]

9. With the power of Satan. Satan will work through this Wicked One to fool people. See notes on *Rev. 13:11-14. Miracles and false signs and wonders.* Things that seem to be from God. This will also include counterfeit "outpourings of the Holy Spirit."

10. On those who will perish. Note that this is really not directed against the *faithful believer*, but the "nominal church member." These are not ignorant of Truth, but they do not love it and welcome it!

11-12. For this reason. Those whom God cannot convince, he confuses! If you know the truth and will not obey it, you are in effect, calling God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit a liar! Compare *Isaiah 66:3-4.* The result is. Only Truth can make you free (*John 8:32*). Those who believe the Truth will seize it and make themselves part of it (see note on *Acts 2:38*). Those who rebel against Truth, seal their own doom (*Mark 16:16*). But God CALLS EVERYONE to come to him (see note on *Rev. 22:17*).

You Are Chosen for Salvation

¹³We must thank God at all times for you, brothers, you whom the Lord loves. For God chose you as the first to be saved, by the Spirit's power to make you God's holy people, and by your faith in the truth. ¹⁴God called you to this through the Good News we preached to you; he called you to possess your share of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So then, brothers, stand firm and hold on to those truths which we taught you, both in our preaching and in our letter.

¹⁶May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and in his grace gave us eternal courage and a good hope, ¹⁷fill your hearts with courage and make you strong to do and say all that is good.

Pray for Us

3 Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the Lord's message may continue to spread rapidly and receive glory, just as it did among you. ²Pray also that God will rescue us from wicked and evil men. For not all people believe the message.

Stand Firm

But we ought always to ¹³thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to ¹⁴this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

May our Lord Jesus Christ ¹⁶himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷en- courage and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Request for Prayer

3 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. ²

13-17. **For God chose you.** In contrast to the victims of the Mysterious Wickedness, the Thessalonian Christians had been chosen to be saved! See note on *1 Thess. 1:4*. God's Plan included the Gentiles from the very beginning! See notes on *Acts 15:15-18; Rom. 9:30-33*. **By the Spirit's power.** See notes on *John 3:5; Titus 3:5; Acts 19:1-6*. On the human side, their salvation was by their faith in the truth. On the divine side, it was by the Spirit's power. [Sanctification is the believer taking justification seriously!] **God called you to this through the Good News.** This is the way God calls people to himself. Compare *John 6:45*. **So then, brothers, stand firm.** The Good News called them to share the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to *hold on firmly* to this and never to let go! [The Good News is the *truth* of God's act in Christ to set men free, and all the doctrine which results from this.] **Gave us eternal courage and a good hope.** "My dear friends, we are now God's children, but it is not yet clear what we shall become. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall become like him, because we shall see him as he really is" (*1 John 3:2*). **And make you strong to do and say all that is good.** A Christian gives his life as a *living sacrifice* to God. This is a form of worship! Compare *Phil. 2:15-16*.

1. **Pray for us.** How often Paul asks this! Compare *1 Thess. 5:25*. **That the Lord's message.** He does not ask for the honor and power the world has to give. He is eager to have the Lord's message spread rapidly. "May others be blessed by the Good News as we are!" **Receive glory.** Compare *Acts 13:48*. **Just as it did among you.** See *1 Thess. 1:9*.

2. **Pray also.** The wicked and evil men Paul speaks of, are beyond the hope of winning them to Christ. For a quick answer to this prayer, see *Acts 18:9-10*. These wicked and evil men may be the same as in *1 Thess. 2:14-16*. **For not all.** Compare *Matt. 10:34-36*. People divide themselves by either believing or disbelieving Jesus Christ.

³But the Lord is faithful. he will make you strong and keep you safe from the Evil One. ⁴And the Lord gives us confidence in you; we are sure that you are doing and will continue to do what we tell you. ⁵May the Lord lead your hearts to the love for God and to the endurance that is given by Christ.

The Obligation to Work

⁶In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we command you, brothers: keep away from all brothers who are living a lazy life, who do not follow the instructions that we gave them. ⁷You yourselves know very well that you should do just what we did. We were not lazy when we were with you. ⁸We did not accept anyone's support without paying for it. Instead, we worked and toiled; day and night we kept working so as not to be an expense to any of you. ⁹We did this, not because we do not have the right to demand our support; we did it to be an example for you to follow.

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

Warning Against Idleness

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to

3. **But the Lord is faithful.** "Some may be unbelievers and hostile to you, but God keeps every promise which he has made!" **Keep you safe.** From the power of Satan, who is the Evil One.

4. **Gives us confidence in you.** "The Lord's power and faithfulness gives us confidence in you - that you will continue to follow our instructions to you."

5. **That is given by Christ.** Endurance and boldness grow out of our sense of God's love, which Christ teaches us. Compare *1 John 4:18*.

6. **We command you.** Like an army officer commanding his troops, Paul gives a strong word of command *in the name of Christ!* This shows how important it is to upgrade and develop the endurance [ΗΥΠΟΜΟΝΗ] of verse 5. **Keep away from all brothers.** Just as you avoid one who is a disease-carrier (*1 Cor. 5:6*). Note this applies specifically to one who is a brother (or sister) in Christ (compare *1 Cor. 5:9-13*). **A lazy life.** Some, in their excitement over the Second Coming, which they thought was about to happen, quit working and became *lazy loafers*. This disorganized the life of the congregation, and was a serious threat to the future of the church!

7. **Just what we did.** Paul and the other apostles can point to their own self-supporting and orderly lives as examples. See note on *1 Thess. 2:9*.

8. **Instead, we worked and toiled.** Compare note on *Acts 18:3*. Paul places strong emphasis on the moral discipline of work.

9. **To be an example.** Paul had every right to be supported by the church, (and he did this some times, *2 Cor. 11:8*); but here conditions demanded he set them an example. But the Thessalonians must not misunderstand what he did!

¹⁰While we were with you we told you, "Whoever does not want to work is not allowed to eat."

¹¹We say this because we hear that there are some people among you who live lazy lives, who do nothing except meddle in other people's business. ¹²In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we command these people and warn them: they must lead orderly lives and work to earn their own living.

¹³But you, brothers, must not get tired of doing good. ¹⁴There may be someone there who will not obey the message we send you in this letter. If so, take note of him and have nothing to do with him, so that he will be ashamed. ¹⁵But do not treat him as an enemy; instead, warn him as a brother.

Final Words

¹⁶May the Lord himself, who is our source of peace, give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all.

follow. For even when we 10 were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

We hear that some among 11 you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. In the name of the Lord 12 Jesus Christ, we command and urge such people to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for you, 13 brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

If anyone does not obey 14 our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard 15 him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

Final Greetings

Now may the Lord of 16 peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

10. **We told you.** Some see work as a curse (*Gen. 3:19*), but it is also a blessing! "You can be so *heavenly minded* that you are no *earthly good*!" The Holy Spirit, through Paul, gives a strong *work-ethic* in *Eph. 4:28*. The original divine ideas of the Creation are given real meaning in the gospel of Christ!

11. **We say this because.** He had heard of this serious problem. Compare *verse 6*. The first persecution in Thessalonica had involved a crowd of *lazy loafers* (*Acts 17:5*). **Who do nothing except meddle.** Compare *1 Tim. 5:13*. One who does not work actively to *build up*, will develop idle, fussy habits, meddle in other people's business, and *tear down*!

12. **In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.** He is the source of Paul's authority to make this command. Paul does not speak directly to the ones living *lazy lives*. But, they know who they are. By Christ's command, they are to go to work, live quiet useful lives, and to help preserve the *life* of the messianic community.

13. **Must not get tired of doing good.** Hard-working, dependable Christians are not to covet the idle life of the *lazy loafers*. "*Don't let evil men worry you; don't be envious of them. A wicked man has no future - nothing to look forward to*" (*Prov. 24:19-20*).

14. **If so, take note of him.** This is Paul's last word on the matter. The church (as a group) must act to make him ashamed. But note Paul's word of caution in *verse 15*.

15. **Instead, warn him as a brother.** Punishment has a way of getting *out of hand*! The whole point of it, is not to *damn him to hell*, but to *save him in eternity*!

16. **Who is the source of our peace.** *Peace* - as contrasted with the fears and troubles the church is having! [*Lord: see note on Rom. 16:27.*]

¹⁷With my own hand I write this: *Greetings from Paul*. This is the way I sign every letter; this is how I write.

¹⁸May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

I, Paul, write this greeting ¹⁷ in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.

The grace of our Lord ¹⁸ Jesus Christ be with all of you.

17. **With my own hand I write this.** This part in his own handwriting shows the whole thing is genuine. Compare notes on *2 Thess. 2:2; Rom. 16:22*.

18. **May the grace.** This is his handwritten word of benediction.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY

The Letters to Timothy and Titus deal more with church organization and church culture than any of the other Letters. These belong to the closing period of Paul's life. *Ramsay* places First Timothy and Titus in the period between Paul's release and his second imprisonment (63-66 A.D.). He places Paul's second imprisonment in 67 A.D., and thinks Second Timothy was written during this time, with Paul's execution coming shortly after this. (See introduction to Second Timothy.) As Paul writes this Letter to him, he would be in his early thirties (*1 Tim. 4:12*).

We meet Timothy in *Acts 16:1* (see notes there). Timothy is a *second generation Christian!* The Jews called the child of a Jewish mother and a Greek father a MAMZER (bastard), and he would have had no access to the synagogue without being circumcised. As *Malphurs* points out, only the fact that his devout mother and grandmother were Christians could explain the unusual fact that they had not circumcised him. *Malphurs* thinks Timothy's father was a "Gentile converted to Judaism," and that he was in the crowd on Pentecost and was baptized into Christ at that time. Therefore, this young man grew up in a Christian home! Either Lystra or Derbe was his *home town*, and he probably was "buried with Christ in the liquid grave" during the time of *Acts 14:6* (Johnson thinks so). He could not have been more than fifteen at that time, and some estimates would make him as young as ten years old.

Timothy had *grown up with* the Old Testament Scriptures (the Septuagint). Paul took him as a *traveling assistant* (*Acts 16:3*), and gave him (one of) *the gifts from the spirit* (*2 Tim. 1:6*; evidently the *ability to direct others*). In order to make it easier to work with the Jews, Paul had Timothy

circumcised (*Acts 16:3*). Timothy worked hard to spread the Good News of Christ and to teach and train the new Christians and form them into communities (churches). *MacKnight* thinks that after Paul's release from his first imprisonment, Timothy went with him to Judea (compare *Heb. 13:23*), going through Crete on the way. Then visiting the Colossian and Ephesian churches, and Timothy was left at Ephesus, where he is when Paul writes these Letters to him. Some think Timothy was still at Ephesus when Revelation was written, and that he is the *angel* (preacher) of the church in Ephesus (*Rev. 2:1*). Traditional history says he died a martyr's death, killed by the mob during the festival of Artemis (compare *Acts 19:28-34*, for a similar mob), sometime in the last decade of the first century. See also the introduction to Second Timothy.

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by order of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope—

²To Timothy, my true son in the faith:

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

Warnings against False Teaching

³I want you to stay in Ephesus, just as I urged you when I was on my way to Macedonia. Some people there are teaching false doctrines, and you must order them to stop. "Tell them to give up those legends and those long lists of names of ancestors, because these only produce arguments; they do not serve God's plan, which is known by faith. ⁵The purpose of this order is to arouse the love that comes from a pure heart,

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

To Timothy my true son in the faith: **2**

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warning Against False Teachers of the Law

As I urged you when I **3** went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote **4** themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this **5** command is love, which comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sin-

1. An apostle of Christ Jesus. One purpose of this letter was to show Timothy's authority, so Paul makes it plain that he writes as an apostle. **By order of God.** The *circumcision party* tried to undermine the authority of Paul. For this reason, he often repeats the fact that it was by God's own order that he is an apostle, sent to the Gentiles (*Acts 9:15; Rom. 1:1*). Some think a comma should be placed after "Christ Jesus," and understand Paul to be saying: "I Paul write this letter by the order of God."

2. To Timothy. Paul calls Timothy "my true son," because: (1) he brought him to Christ (*1 Cor. 4:15-17*); (2) the followers of the prophets were called *sons* of the prophets.

3. I want you to stay in Ephesus. Timothy was not a "bishop" in the modern sense, but a teaching evangelist (*compare note on Eph. 4:11*). It was his mission to teach the new Christians, to appoint church leaders (elders), to train workers, and to oppose false doctrines. **You must order them to stop.** This must refer to the *circumcision party* in the church, since Timothy would have no authority over outsiders. Paul does not mention the names of these people, but Timothy knows them. He is to put a stop to their false teaching!

4. Tell them to give up. The *circumcision party* had picked up elements of Greek mysticism and blended these with Jewish tradition. They used this to "prove" that salvation comes only through obeying the Law of Moses. See note on *Titus 1:14*. **Legends.** These are myths invented by the teachers of the Law. **Long lists of names.** Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, had built up a mystical interpretation of these lists of names, in which they were symbolic of different conditions of the soul. See note on *Titus 3:9*. **They do not serve God's plan.** These false doctrines can only produce arguments. They tear down and destroy, rather than build up!

5. The purpose. Love is not produced by the things which the *circumcision party* were teaching. Since love is so vital to the life of the church (see notes on *Rev. 2:4-5*), Timothy must stop those who teach these divisive things. Instead, they are to arouse the love that every Christian must have!

a clear conscience, and a genuine faith. ⁶Some men have turned away from these and have lost their way in foolish discussions. ⁷They want to be teachers of God's law, but they do not understand their own words or the matters about which they speak with so much confidence.

⁸We know that the Law is good, if it is used as it should be used. ⁹It must be remembered, of course, that laws are made, not for good people, but for lawbreakers and criminals, for the godless and sinful, for those who are not religious or spiritual, for men who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰for the immoral, for sexual perverts, for kidnappers, for those who lie and give false testimony or do anything else contrary to the true teaching. ¹¹That teaching is found in the gospel that was entrusted to me to announce, the Good News from the glorious and blessed God.

Gratitude for God's Mercy

¹²I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength for my work. I thank him for considering me worthy, and appointing me

cere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

We know that the law is good if a man uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for good men, but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, ¹⁰for slave traders and liars perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to ¹¹the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

The Lord's Grace to Paul

I thank Christ Jesus our ¹²Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me

6. **Have turned away.** They have completely missed the target at which they are shooting! They have lost their way, as these foolish discussions have blinded them to what is TRUE!

7. **They want to be teachers.** They are "saviors of mankind," who think they are doing God's will by their devotion to the Law of Moses. **But they do not understand** either the results of their words, or the nature and meaning of the Law about which they speak.

8. **We know.** "The Law itself is good; and both it and the gospel promote good conduct. But the Law cannot be used to teach legends and long lists of names of ancestors." Compare *2 Tim. 2:5* and note.

9-10. **It must be remembered.** "Law" is not given to put men right with God, but to stop those who do evil and to punish them. See note at the end of *Rom. 3:31*.

11. **That teaching.** The true teaching. The Good News of Jesus Christ is based on the FACTS of God's act in him to set men free. The true teaching is based on the AUTHORITY of Christ. These false teachers claimed they were teaching the gospel (see *Gal. 1:6-9* and notes).

12. **Who has given me strength.** "I cannot talk about my part in preaching the gospel without thanking God for forgiving my sins and mistakes, and for appointing me to serve Him and giving me the strength to do it!"

to serve him, ¹³even though in the past I spoke evil of him, and persecuted and insulted him. But God was merciful to me, because I did not believe and so did not know what I was doing. ¹⁴And our Lord poured out his abundant grace on me and gave me the faith and love which are ours in union with Christ Jesus. ¹⁵This is a true saying, to be completely accepted and believed: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I am the worst of them, ¹⁶but it was for this very reason that God was merciful to me, in order that Christ Jesus might show his full patience in dealing with me, the worst of sinners, as an example for all those who would later believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷To the eternal King, immortal and invisible, the only God—to him be honor and glory forever and ever! Amen.

to his service. Even though I ¹³ was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of ¹⁴ our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Here is a trustworthy say- ¹⁵ ing that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But ¹⁶ for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King ¹⁷ eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

13. **Even though in the past.** Neither Paul himself (nor his enemies) could ever forget what he had done. **But God was merciful to me.** Not only in forgiving Paul's sin, but in allowing him to serve Him! Note that even when Paul persecuted and insulted Christ (Christ's church), he did not do it to rebel against God. He did it to serve God, and when he discovered he was wrong, he changed!

14. **His abundant grace.** The point is that God's grace outweighs Paul's sin!!! It may be that Paul's enemies (especially the circumcision party) tried to discredit and disqualify his *apostleship* by pointing to his great sin in trying to destroy Christ's church. **Gave me the faith and love.** By *faith*, Paul means "the understanding of the power and wisdom of God, which showed him that God does not need anyone to serve him by means of persecution and cruelty (things which are un-Godly)." By *love*, Paul means the *frame of mind* that allowed men to choose for themselves in matters of religion (as he did himself). [It is difficult, but necessary, to achieve a balance between "stopping error" and permitting "free choice."]

15. **For this is a true saying.** Compare *Titus 1:9* and note. **Christ Jesus.** This is a "statement of faith!" Paul, a sinner who had been saved, was a proof of this *statement*. **I am the worst of them.** Probably his enemies said this. But Paul has no false modesty. The more you learn about God, the more you realize your sinfulness!!! See *1 John 1:8-10*.

16. **For this very reason.** See notes on *Acts 9:1-2*. If God was willing to save "Saul the Destroyer," it ought to serve as proof that God is willing to save all who come to Him through Christ!!!

17. **To the eternal King!** This is Paul's *song of praise* to the God who forgave him and saved him! Compare *Rom. 16:25-27*; *1 Tim. 6:16*. **Invisible.** This *identifies* the ONLY God from the idols who were visible.

¹⁸Timothy, my child, I entrust this command to you. It is according to the words of prophecy spoken long ago about you. Let those words be your weapons as you fight the good fight, ¹⁹and keep your faith and clear conscience. Some men have not listened to their conscience, and have made a ruin of their faith. ²⁰Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to the power of Satan, so that they will be taught to stop speaking evil of God.

Church Worship

2 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be

Timothy, my son, I give 18 you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding 19 on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among 20 them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

Instructions on Worship

2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—

18. I entrust this command to you. What Paul said in *verses 3 and 5*. According to the words of prophecy. Compare *Acts 13:1-3* and notes. The Holy Spirit selected Timothy (speaking through the prophets), and these words spoken *identified* Timothy as one who had the potential to do the work. Paul gives both Timothy and Titus lists of rules and qualifications so they will be able to identify those persons who can be church leaders and church helpers. **Let those words.** "The words of prophecy placed an obligation on you. As you think of these things, it will give you courage and strength to do your job well!" See *1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6*.

19. **And clear conscience.** "To fight the good fight, you must keep your faith, but also a clear conscience. You can do this by refusing to use the unethical methods of the false teachers." **Have not listened.** "Faith is a ship, and conscience is the pilot. Some men have not listened to their pilot, and have wrecked their ship of faith on the rocks of sin." See Paul's strong impeachment of false teachers in *Gal. 1:6-9*.

20. **Hymenaeus and Alexander.** *MacKnight* thinks these belong to the circumcision party. Hymenaeus is mentioned again in *2 Tim. 2:17-18*; and Alexander is probably the one mentioned in *2 Tim. 4:14-15*. **To the power of Satan.** That is, put out of the church, but compare note on *1 Cor. 5:5*. Apostles had the power to punish severely (see *Acts 13:8-12* and notes). *MacKnight* thinks this was not done through the church at Ephesus, but directly by Paul himself, as he had the authority to do.

1. **First of all, then.** It is plain that Paul here speaks about church worship. But see *verses 8 & 15*. Yet at this time, worship had not been divorced from ordinary life, as it has in our time. If the church-meeting is viewed as "The Assembly" in the sense of a *discrete entity*, it is easy to begin believing that the church only exists when "The Assembly" has come together. **I urge that.** Paul does not fear the circumcision party, and he boldly urges that Christians pray for the people of all nations and religions. Paul uses four words to describe prayer in general, so that every kind is covered. Paul understands better than we do, the relationship of Christian to non-Christian (*1 John 5:19*), but he also knows that God's purpose is to save as many as possible! Every Christian must have that same attitude!!! "God's act in Christ is available to all mankind! My own work among the Gentiles is one example of God bringing His estranged children home."

offered to God for all men; ²for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life, in entire godliness and proper conduct. ³This is good and it pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all men to be saved and to come to know the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and there is one who brings God and men together, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself to redeem all men. That was the proof, at the right time, that God wants all men to be saved, ⁷and this is why I was sent as an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, to proclaim the message of faith and truth. I am not lying, I am telling the truth!

⁸I want men everywhere to pray, men who are dedicated to God and can lift up their hands in prayer without anger or argument.

for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

2. **For kings and all others.** Whether they are "worthy" has nothing to do with it. Christians are to pray for all who are in authority, no matter who they are or what they are! [It is very possible that the circumcision party opposed praying for non-Christians.] **That we may live.** *Plummer* writes: "Only in the attitude of mind which makes us pray and give thanks for our fellowmen is the tranquillity of a godly life possible." *Johnson* takes this to mean the prayers ask God to overrule the authorities to allow Christians to live and worship in peace. But this might contradict *1 Thess. 3:3*.]

3. **This is good.** The habit of praying for rulers and all men (mankind).

4. **Who wants all men to be saved.** This is why God acted in Christ! He has made salvation available to everyone who will seize it (*Rev. 22:17*).

5. **For there is one God.** "Not many gods, as the pagans think." **And there is one.** "Not one for Jews and another for Gentiles!" God's act in Christ is universal, not restricted to any one nation as was the Law. **The man Christ Jesus.** Our High Priest understands us (*Heb. 4:14-16*)! As Paul writes, there was a danger that the *humanness* of Christ would be denied. Compare *1 John 5:6* and note.

6. **Who gave himself.** See *John 10:17-18* and notes. The entire earthly career of Christ Jesus, from his virgin birth to his ascension, was to redeem (*Rev. 5:9-10*) all men. Compare *2 Cor. 5:14*; *Rom. 5:18* and notes. **That was the proof.** The right time for proving Christ gave himself to redeem all men, was after he had done it. Compare *Acts ch 2*. *MacKnight* writes: "So that, since Christ gave himself for all, it is certainly the will of God that we should pray for all."

7. **And this is why.** To tell the Good News of God's act in Christ! See *Acts 26:18*. **I am not lying.** Some tried to discredit Paul's appointment to be an apostle. Also, what he taught contradicted what they believed! He strongly affirms the TRUTH of what he preaches. Compare *Rom. 1:9*; *2 Cor. 11:10*; *12:19*; *Gal. 1:20*.

8. **I want men everywhere to pray.** *White* takes this to mean: "That the men should conduct public worship." But this would force "everywhere" to mean "in places of public worship." *MacKnight* writes: "Everywhere By this precept, the apostle condemned the superstitious notion both of the Jews and Gentiles, who fancied that prayers offered in the temples were more acceptable to God than prayers offered anywhere else. - The worshipping of God in all places was foretold as the peculiar glory of the

⁹I also want women to be modest and sensible about their clothes and to dress properly; not with fancy hair styles, or with gold ornaments or pearls or expensive dresses, ¹⁰but with good deeds, as is proper for women who claim to be religious. ¹¹Women should learn in silence and all humility. ¹²I do not allow women to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet. ¹³For Adam was created first, and then

I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but ¹⁰with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

A woman should learn in ¹¹quietness and full submission. I do not permit a ¹²woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam ¹³was formed first, then Eve.

gospel dispensation. *Mal. 1:11.* "F. I. Stanley writes: "The rest of the chapter is used in telling Timothy how to teach men to lead the kind of life that Christian men and women should live. Frankly, it has nothing to do with the assembly [public worship], but with the daily lives of men and women." **Can lift up their hands.** Ancient Christians often prayed with their hands held above their heads, with their eyes looking up toward the sky. **Without anger or argument.** See *1 Tim. 1:3-4* and notes.

9. **Women to be modest.** Probably no one applies this verse only to the church meeting. It certainly speaks to everyday life, just as *verse 8* does. Notice that *modest* here refers to *overdressing*. **Not with fancy hair styles.** The point here is not to dress in such a way as to "show off." Read Isaiah's description in *Isa. 3:16-24*. *Tertullian* writes: "What is the use of showing a decent and Christian simplicity in your face, while you load the rest of your body with the dangling absurdities of pomps and vanities?" Compare *1 Pet. 3:1-6* and notes.

10. **But with good deeds.** *Ellicott* takes this as *adding good deeds*. I do not understand Paul to specifically forbid women to braid their hair, etc., but to forbid them to *show off* in their use of such things and so put to shame the poor of their group (compare *1 Cor. 11:22* and note). "Actions speak louder than words!" Compare *Acts 9:36-39*.

11. **In silence and all humility.** "Silence" is *HESUCHIA* = not bossy, not meddlesome. A different word is used in *1 Cor. 14:34-35*. But the key to understanding these next verses is "to whom it is directed."

12. **I do not allow women.** *White* says: "This refers of course only to public teaching, or to a wife's teaching her husband." But *verse 13* points to a man-woman relationship. *F. I. Stanley* sees this parallel to what Paul says in *Eph. 5:22-28*. The relationship of husband and wife is exactly the same as that of Adam and Eve. If we view this chapter in that way, we see Paul talking about: Our country; Our rulers; Our prayers; Our clothing; Our having children. He deals with life in general, and not just church worship only. Adam and Eve did not make the first church-meeting, but they were the first husband and wife = home. Compare *1 Cor. 11:7-12*. **They must keep quiet.** This is *HESUCHIA*. See note on *verse 11*. Since scripture cannot contradict itself, what Paul says here must be understood in view of the things said in other places. *C. R. Nichol* writes: "That Women are to teach in the Christian Dispensation is a matter of prophecy (*Joel 2:28-30; Acts 2:17*). Not only did Joel and Peter declare that women would teach, but the record is clear that Philip had four unmarried daughters who did prophesy, they taught (*Acts 21:9*)! But to teach under conditions which will place woman in authority over man, for her to refuse to recognize the leadership of man, for her to refuse to be in 'subjection' to man, is to flaunt sex relationship, and that is a sin." [From "God's Woman."]

13. **For Adam.** Paul shows that the fact that Adam was created first, sets a pattern for rank. Woman is subordinate, but not inferior. Compare *1 Cor. 11:11-12*.

Eve. ¹⁴And it was not Adam who was deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and broke God's law. ¹⁵But a woman will be saved through having children, if she perseveres in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

And Adam was not the one 14
deceived; it was the woman
who was deceived and be-
came a sinner. But women 15
will be kept safe through
childbirth, if they continue
in faith, love and holiness
with propriety.

Leaders in the Church

3 This is a true saying: If a man is eager to be a church leader he desires an excellent work. ²A church leader must be a man without fault; he must have only one wife, be sober, self-controlled, and orderly; he must welcome strangers in his

Overseers and Deacons

3 Here is a trustworthy say-
ing: If anyone sets his
heart on being an overseer,
he desires a noble task. Now 2
the overseer must be above
reproach, the husband of
but one wife, temperate, self-
controlled, respectable hos-

14. **It was the woman who was deceived.** Paul says "woman," rather than "Eve," to emphasize sex rather than individual. Adam is representative of every male; Eve of every female. In them we see the different psychology between man and woman. Eve's sin was unbelief. She was deceived and broke God's law. Paul says Adam was not deceived. Note that God treats Eve's unbelief more severely than Adam's deliberate act (see *Gen. 3:16*).

15. **But a woman will be saved.** *Lipscomb* thinks this shows woman's role to be: having children and taking care of them (the husband-wife relationship). *MacKnight* says: "However, though Eve was first in transgression, and brought death on herself, her husband, and her posterity, *the female sex shall be saved* equally with the male, *through childbearing*; through bringing forth the Saviour; *if they live in faith, and love, and chastity* [holiness], *with that sobriety* [modesty] which I have been recommending." Compare *1 Tim. 1:14* and note. Probably Paul says some of these things to refute those who said that woman was guilty of destroying the human race. Certain religious sects have taught that a woman has no soul. Paul shows us, that if woman brought sin into the world, she also brought the Savior into the world! "Salvation is the goal of both man and woman. They both achieve great happiness in working out the primal penalty which God placed on Adam and Eve." [It is argued there were no women apostles, but neither were there any Gentile apostles. However, there were no women church leaders (elders) or evangelists in the church of the First Century.]

1. **A church leader.** Here for the first time the qualifications and work of church leaders and church helpers are examined. Without a doubt, the first Christians took the synagogue as a model or pattern for work and worship. This was doubtless God's *providence* at work. Compare notes on *Acts 2:44-45* about the new attitude found in Christians. Paul here praises those who have lawful ambition, and tells how to measure them. [The titles "elder" and "deacon" are used in "standard English" in an unbiblical way, because of the practices in many church groups. See note on *Eph. 4:11*.]

2. **A man without fault.** This is the basic qualification. He is one who "practices what he preaches." **Only one wife.** History shows that the church in later centuries took this to mean: "If he is married at all, he must not have more than one wife." But the Jewish view would certainly have been: "He must be a married man with children (at least one child)." Christianity does not forbid remarriage after the death of the spouse (see *1 Cor. 7:8-9, 39*), so "only one wife" is not violated by a widower who remarries. **Sober.** Not one who *runs to extremes*. **Self-controlled.** Sensible; one who thinks before he acts. **Orderly.** Systematic, well-behaved, an organizer. [It is not often that a good preacher could make a good church leader as well.] **Welcome strangers.** This was essential, because persecution often made Christians homeless. **Able to teach.** He must have both the knowledge and the ability to communicate it to others. In this fact, the "church leader" and the "evangelist" overlap in their duties.

home; he must be able to teach; ³he must not be a drunkard or a violent man, but gentle and peaceful; he must not love money; ⁴he must be able to manage his own family well, and make his children obey him with all respect. ⁵For if a man does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of the church of God? ⁶He must not be a man who has been recently converted; else he will swell up with pride and be condemned, as the Devil was. ⁷He should be a man who is respected by the people outside the church, so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the Devil's trap.

pitabile, able to teach, not 3
given to much wine, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own 4
family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does 5
not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He 6
must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must 7
also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Deacons, likewise, are to 8
be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must 9
keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear con-

Helpers in the Church

⁸Church helpers must also be of a good character and sincere; they must not drink too much wine or be greedy; ⁹they should hold to the revealed truth of the faith with a clear con-

3. **Not be a drunkard.** Not an alcoholic. **Or a violent man.** One who has an *explosive* temper! **Gentle and peaceful.** He and the other church leaders (there were always more than one in each congregation) act as **ARBITRATORS** of the problems that come up in the life of the congregation. **He must not love money.** He must not be one who thinks religion is a way to get rich (*1 Tim. 6:5*).

4. **Able to manage his own family.** A man's actual character will be seen in the *general* character of his own family. **With all respect.** He must be able to *earn* the respect of his own children.

5. **For if.** "If he does not have the ability to manage so small a group as his own family, how will he be able to take charge of the messianic community?" Note that each church-group was managed by a *board* of two or more church leaders.

6. **He must not be.** Remember the churches were made up of many who had come from paganism, and whose moral standards had been very low. Compare *1 Pet. 4:2-4*. A man must have been a Christian long enough to demonstrate the reality of his faith. Yet notice Paul appointed church leaders in only a few years time after beginning a congregation. See notes on *Acts 14:23; 20:17*. **As the Devil was.** See *2 Pet. 2:4*.

7. **By the people outside the church.** This is one of the proofs of his sanity of judgment. Also, since he will in effect be an advertisement for the messianic community (church), he must not be a social outcast. [*MacKnight* thinks this refers to the time before he became a Christian, but I think *1 Pet. 4:2-4* proves that we are to ignore what a man (or woman) may have been before they became a Christian. Past mistakes should not be allowed to veto present ability.]

8. **Church helpers.** See note on *verse 1*. They are not to be alcoholics, or those who think religion is a way to get rich.

9. **They should hold.** To the revealed truth of God's act in Christ (see *1 Cor. 2:6-10*). **With a clear conscience.** That is, fear or self-interest will not cause them to either conceal or disguise this truth. See note on *1 Tim. 1:19*.

science. ¹⁰They should be tested first, and then, if they pass the test, they should serve. ¹¹Their wives also must be of good character, and not gossip; they must be sober and honest in everything. ¹²A church helper must have only one wife, and be able to manage his children and family well. ¹³Those who do a good work win for themselves a good standing and are able to speak boldly about their faith in Christ Jesus.

The Great Secret

¹⁴As I write this letter to you, I hope to come and see you soon. ¹⁵But if I delay, this letter will let you know how we should conduct ourselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

science. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and

10. **They should be tested first.** *MacKnight* thinks this was done by announcing the names of the candidates to the congregation, so that any charge of misconduct could be searched out. God's servants are chosen from those who are *without fault*.

11. **Their wives.** The Greek word may mean either women or wives. The fact that no mention is made of the church leader's wives implies this is something special. *Johnson* thinks these are either deaconesses or the wives of the church helpers. Probably these were wives who were also church helpers themselves. Many things a church helper would be required to do, could only be done by a woman, especially in the East. See notes on *Rom. 16:1-2; Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 5:9-10*.

12. **Only one wife.** See note on *verse 2*. **Be able to manage.** See notes on *verses 4-5*. A church helper does not manage the affairs of the church, but he (or she) will be deeply involved in the lives of the members, especially at times of crisis.

13. **Win for themselves.** Even the wicked must come to respect those who show so much kindness and mercy in helping the poor, the sick, and the persecuted. **Able to speak boldly.** Love in action builds up the one who does these things, whether he is a church helper or an ordinary Christian. See *James 2:18*. Perhaps *boldness about their faith* grows out of *love in action!*

14. **I hope to come.** We do not know whether Paul did visit Ephesus, but some think he did on his way to Crete.

15. **But if I delay.** "I would much rather speak with you in person, but because life is so uncertain, I have written you this letter. It will show you how we ought to live as members of God's household." [God's house is built of living stones (*Eph. 2:19-22*), not brick and mortar.] **The pillar and support of the truth.** Truth if revealed to isolated individuals, no matter how many, would soon be dissipated in the world. But the messianic community (church), in which truth is given an objective and real existence, forces the world to become aware of it, and is its own *credential*. Compare *Heb. 10:25*.

¹⁶No one can deny how great is the secret of our religion.

He appeared in human form,
was shown to be right by the Spirit,
and was seen by angels.
He was preached among the nations,
was believed in the world, and was
taken up to heaven.

foundation of the truth. Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

He appeared in a body,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.

Instructions to Timothy

False Teachers

4 The Spirit says clearly that some men will abandon the faith in later times; they will obey lying spirits and follow the teachings of demons. ²These teachings come from the deceit of men who are liars, and whose consciences are

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

16. **No one can deny.** The secret is the disclosure to mankind of practical religion (*1 Cor. 2:6-10*). No one can deny the claims of Christianity are tremendous!!! **He appeared.** The Logos took a human body of flesh and blood! See note on *John 1:14*. **Was shown to be right.** The Jewish leaders said he was a phony. The Holy Spirit showed he was right, by raising him from death!!! See *John 16:8-11* and notes. **Was seen by angels.** Angels were at the empty tomb, were the first to see the Risen Christ, and told the women. [The same Greek word means *angel* and *messenger*. Some think this may refer to those who saw him after he raised from death, and were messengers who told others about it.] **He was preached.** Compare *Matt. 24:14* and note. [This could refer to making salvation available to the Gentiles (*Acts 15:12-18* and notes).] **Was believed.** See *John 17:21*; *2 Thess. 1:10*; *1 Thess. 1:9-10*. **Was taken up.** See *Heb. 9:11-12* and notes. **GOD HAS MADE ALL OF THESE THINGS KNOWN IN THE MESSAGE OF THE GOOD NEWS!!!**

1. **The Spirit says.** "Although the church supports the truth by preserving the secret of our religion in the world, the Spirit revealed to me and to others who are inspired, that apostasy will take place in the church itself. In fact, this is going on right now (*2 Thess. 2:7*)." It was "standard practice" for a prophet to speak out against the sin and sinners of *his own time*, in the form of a prediction. See also *2 Tim. ch 3*; *Acts 20:29-30* and notes. **Lying spirits.** Those who falsely claim to speak by inspiration. See note on *1 Cor. 12:3*. **Teachings of demons.** This may mean: (1) worship of the dead, evil spirits, and angels (one manuscript adds to this verse: *'For they will be worshipers of the dead, as in Israel also they were worshiped'*); (2) evil spirits will themselves "think up" the false teachings and give them to men.

2. **These teachings come from.** The great mass of mankind are merely deceived, and can be taught the truth of God. But these men are active agents of the Devil. This is examined in notes on *Rev. ch 13*. "These teachings which I am about to mention, come from men who are liars. As hypocrites, they pretend to be very holy and humble. But unlike the pagans who have an active conscience (*Rom. 2:15*), these have a dead conscience and are *amoral*. But you will be able to recognize them by the way they act (*Matt. 7:15-20*)."

dead, as if burnt with a hot iron. ³Such men teach that it is wrong to marry and to eat certain foods. But God created these foods to be eaten, after a prayer of thanks, by those who are believers and have come to know the truth. ⁴Everything that God has created is good; nothing is to be rejected, but all is to be received with a prayer of thanks; ⁵because the word of God and the prayer make it acceptable to God.

A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

⁶If you give these instructions to the brothers you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, as you feed yourself spiritually on the words of faith and of the true teaching which you have followed. ⁷But keep away from those godless legends, which are not worth telling. Keep yourself in

They forbid people to marry ³ and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything ⁴ God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

If you point these things ⁶ out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do ⁷ with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train

3. Wrong to marry. Even Paul taught that marriage was sometimes not the best answer (*1 Cor. 7:26*), but these will teach that marriage is wrong in itself. This false idea was very quickly introduced into the church by some who claimed marriage was the invention of the evil god (Satan). They said it was sinful to bring children into this world to be unhappy and to eventually die. Out of this grew the idea that only celibacy is holy. The worship of demons and the forbidding of marriage go hand in hand. **To eat certain foods.** With Greek thought viewing the body as "evil and anti-spiritual," it was easy to misuse such scriptures as *Rom. 8:13*. These false teachers said it was "holy" to deny your body the better grade of food. They generally prohibited either all meats or certain kinds, and some lived on bread and water. These things are still found among certain religious communities. **But God created these foods.** The Devil is not the one who is the Creator!!! False teachers were saying that the evil god (Satan) created the world and all that is in it. Some who claim to be Christians show by their actions that this is what they believe! Truth tells us that God is the Creator, and He created these foods to be eaten so that our physical bodies may preserve their measure of health.

4. Everything. This points back to *Gen. 1:31*. See what Jesus said in *Matt. 15:10-20*. This shows that all dietary rules have been repealed, especially those of the Law.

5. Because. See how Paul applied this in his own actions (*Acts 27:35*). [There was a closer association in the minds of the early Christians between the ordinary act of eating and the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal), than of us today. They still ate the Supper in the context of a meal (*Acts 20:7* note). Compare *John 21:11-13*.] **Make it acceptable.** "The word of God (*Acts 10:15*) and your prayer of thanks make it acceptable. God uses this food to bless you. And even though I did not mention it, this same logic applies to marriage, which God himself also created to bless you."

6. These instructions. "You must teach the truth about these things I have just mentioned, to warn the brothers about the false things that some will teach." **As you feed yourself spiritually.** "If you are to be a good servant of Christ, you must feed yourself spiritually, as you did in the past (*2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15*). Christian growth is vital (*Heb. 6:1-3*), both to yourself and to those whom you must teach!"

7. But keep away from. "Some things appear to have wisdom (*Col. 2:20-23*), but in truth they may be destructive. Those godless legends (*1 Tim. 1:3-4*) are an example of what I mean. These things actually **IMPEACH** the goodness of the Creator, and so turn many away from Him!" **Keep yourself in training.** True Christian *asceticism* is not essentially of the body, although the human body is the means by which the spiritual nature is stirred and influenced. Compare *1 Tim. 2:2; 1 Thess. 4:11; 1 Cor. 9:27*.

training for a godly life. ⁸Physical exercise has some value in it, but spiritual exercise is valuable in every way, because it promises life both for now and for the future. ⁹This is a true saying, to be completely accepted and believed. ¹⁰That is why we struggle and work hard, because we have placed our hope in the living God, who is Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers, in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith, and purity. ¹³Give your time and effort, until I come, to the public reading of the Scriptures, and to preaching and teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect the spiritual gift that is in you, which was given to you when the prophets spoke and the elders laid

yourself to be godly. For ⁸ physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

This is a trustworthy saying ⁹ that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

Command and teach these ¹¹ things. Don't let anyone look ¹² down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote ¹³ yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not ¹⁴ neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

8. **But spiritual exercise.** The Greeks spent a lot of time training and developing their bodies for the Games. In this same way, Christians are to think of themselves as *in training* for Eternity! [MacKnight thinks this may mean: "The false humility and severe treatment of the body seems wise, but it has no real value."]

9. **This is a true saying.** What he just said in *verse 8*.

10. **That is why.** Paul examines this in *2 Cor. 6:1-10*. Neither physical exercise, nor severe treatment of the body, nor animal sacrifice, nor the power of any idol - can make you happy, either here or in Eternity!!! Note that eternal life begins now, in this present world, for those who love God! Compare *John 10:10*.

11. **Command.** In the point of time, you first teach, and then command. This command must refer to basics which have been accepted, but are in danger of being forgotten. "Timothy, there will be times when you must speak out with the authority you have as an evangelist. Silent example or mild suggestion may not be enough." For an example, see the Lord's warning to Ephesus in *Rev. 2:4-5* and notes.

12. **Do not let.** "Do not let anyone ignore what you say just because you are young. Use your authority, which belongs to the rank of an evangelist." Timothy was probably in his early thirties, but the first century worshiped age. Anyone under fifty years old was "just a kid." Compare *John 8:57*. The church leaders were probably all older than he was, and there was a real danger that they (or the false teachers especially) would look down on him. **But be an example.** "Your life should be good enough to set a pattern for others."

13. **To the public reading.** Since the printing-press had not yet been invented, books were hand-made and scarce. Public reading of the Scriptures was an important part of the church meeting.

14. **Do not neglect.** "Do not fail to make use of the spiritual gift that you received when I laid my hands on you (*2 Tim. 1:6*), at the time you were publicly *identified* as an evangelist of the Good News." Compare notes on *Acts 13:1-3; 16:1-3*.

their hands on you. ¹⁵Practice these things and give yourself to them, in order that your progress may be seen by all. ¹⁶Watch yourself, and watch your teaching. Keep on doing these things, because if you do you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Responsibilities toward Believers

5 Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as if he were your father. Treat the younger men as your brothers, ²the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, with all purity.

³Show respect for widows who really are widows. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn first to carry out their religious duties toward their own family and in this way repay their parents and grandparents, because that is what pleases God. ⁵The woman who is a true widow, with no one to take care of her, has placed her hope in God and continues to

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch 16 your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Advice About Widows, Elders and Slaves

5 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, ²and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Give proper recognition to ³widows who are left all alone. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these ⁴should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. ⁵The widow who is all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray

15. **Practice these things.** The preacher, and every Christian as well, must practice what they preach if they expect to succeed in their life as a Christian. Compare *Eph. 4:13-16*.

16. **Both yourself and those who hear you.** This is the special honor and reward of those who are servants of God! Compare *Ezekiel 33:9; Rom. 10:14-17*.

1-2. **Do not rebuke an older man.** Because Timothy, as an evangelist (see note on *Eph. 4:11*), would have the duty of "rebuking error and correcting faults (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*)," Paul tells how this is to be done. The wise leader must treat the people as individuals. Each age and condition needs separate treatment, and Paul divides them into four groups. Since the church is a *family*, it cannot be run like the army! **With all purity.** There must not be any hint of scandal. As a young man, Timothy must be especially careful.

3. **Show respect for widows.** We can identify four types of widows in what Paul writes here. (1) The true widow (*verse 5*); (2) The widow with children or grandchildren (*verse 4*); (3) The widow who gives herself to pleasure (*verse 6*); (4) The listed widow (*verse 9*). Widows were helpless in the harsh world of the first century. The church quickly showed a sense of responsibility toward their welfare (see *Acts 6:1-6* and notes).

4. **Children or grandchildren.** In normal family relationships, it is the Lord's will that children and grandchildren take care of their parents and grandparents. See *verse 8*.

5. **Who is a true widow.** She has no children or close relatives at all. See Anna (*Luke 2:36-37* and notes).

pray and ask him for his help night and day. ⁶But the widow who gives herself to pleasure has already died, even though she lives. ⁷Give them this command, so that no one will find fault with them. ⁸But if someone does not take care of his relatives, especially the members of his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹Do not add any widow to the list of widows unless she is more than sixty years old. In addition, she must have been married only once, ¹⁰and have a reputation for good deeds: a woman who brought up her children well, received strangers in her home, washed the feet of God's people, helped those in trouble, and gave herself to all kinds of good works.

¹¹But do not include the younger widows in the list; because when their desires make them want

and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well-known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to

6. **Who gives herself to pleasure.** Being cut loose from her husband by his death, she is living an unholy life. This means she is spiritually dead, so long as she continues to live this way. It would be the responsibility of the church leaders (who might work through the listed widows) to work to reclaim this spiritually dead widow. See *Gal. 6:1*.

7. **Give them this command.** Especially the things said in *verse 4*.

8. **But if someone.** The Christian faith includes the law of love! Even unbelievers take care of their own families. [Note that the Essenes were not allowed to help their relatives without special permission from their leaders. But they could help anyone else they pleased. See also the strange custom in *Matt. 15:3-6* and notes.]

9. **Do not add.** A *listed* widow meets certain qualifications; is supported directly by the church; and is in a sense the female counterpart of the church leader. She is primarily a teacher, in contrast to the female church helper (*1 Tim. 3:11* and note). **More than sixty years old.** This is a special requirement, only for a *listed* widow. If she is under sixty, *verse 14* applies. **Married only once.** She must have been a married woman (see note on *1 Tim. 3:2*). She could not have been a prostitute or a concubine.

10. **Have a reputation.** Her past life demonstrates her character and faith. **Who brought up her children well.** Either her natural children, or foster children. This demonstrates her ability. **Received strangers.** Shown her attitude and love by helping those made homeless through persecution. **Washed the feet.** This shows humility and a willingness to serve others. Paul surely is thinking of *John 13:5-15*. **To all kinds of good works.** This sums it all up. She is one who has practiced what she claimed to be.

11. **But do not include.** A younger widow, one under age sixty, must not be made a *listed* widow. See *verse 9*. Remember Paul is speaking about those who want to be included in the list of specially privileged church-widows. It is implied that those on the *list* made a special promise to remain a widow and spend all their time serving Christ. Not everyone would be happy and satisfied doing this, and so Paul specifically forbids the younger widows from being considered for this service.

to marry, they turn away from Christ, ¹²and so become guilty of breaking their first promise to him. ¹³They also learn to waste their time in going around from house to house; but even worse, they learn to be gossips and busybodies, talking of things they should not. ¹⁴So I would rather that the younger widows get married, have children, and take care of their homes, so as to give our enemies no chance of speaking evil of us. ¹⁵For some widows have already turned away to follow Satan. ¹⁶But if any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she must take care of them, and not put the burden on the church, so that it may take care of the widows who are all alone.

¹⁷The elders who do good work as leaders should be considered worthy of receiving double pay, especially those who work hard at preaching

marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are all alone.

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is

12. Breaking their first promise. Not because they get married, but because after having made a promise to devote themselves to this teaching mission, they "go back on their promise" by leaving it to get married.

13. They also learn. They do not have the maturity required for this teaching mission of going from house to house. For those who have the strength (*gift*, 1 Cor. 7:7) to live unmarried in order to give their time and energy to the direct service of God, it is better not to marry again. But there is no *special blessedness* in the fact of being unmarried, especially if the motive for remaining unmarried is a selfish one (such as: to avoid having to take care of a home and family, and to have lots of leisure time for personal pleasure). For this reason, Paul specifies that such widows must be at least sixty years old (*verse 9*).

14. That the younger widows get married. None are to be placed on this list but the aged. There are to be no young nuns. It will be better if the widows under sixty years old get married again. **No chance of speaking evil of us.** Compare 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16.

15. For some. This certainly speaks of something worse than a second marriage, and clearly points to such things as mentioned in *verse 13*.

16. But if any woman. This shows that what Paul said in *verses 4, 7, 8* applies to women as well as to men. [In this section on widows, Paul has been speaking specifically about widows who are *listed widows*, who are teachers supported out of the church treasury. Certainly the church can help other widows who are *unable to help themselves* because of sickness, etc. But only certain ones can be made *listed widows*.]

17. The elders. This is another name for a church leader. See note on 1 Tim. 3:1. **Double pay** = generous support. **At preaching and teaching.** Some church leaders (and some church helpers) were also evangelists.

and teaching. ¹⁸For the scripture says, "Do not tie up the mouth of the ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "The worker deserves his wages." ¹⁹Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. ²⁰Rebuke publicly all those who commit sins, so that the rest may be afraid.

²¹In the presence of God, and of Christ Jesus, and of the holy angels, I solemnly call upon you to obey these instructions without showing any prejudice or favor to anyone in anything you do. ²²Be in no hurry to lay hands on anyone for the Lord's service. Take no part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.

²³Do not drink water only, but take a little wine to help your digestion, since you are sick so often.

preaching and teaching. For 18
the Scripture says, "Do not
muzzle the ox while it is
treading out the grain," and
"The worker deserves his
wages." Do not entertain an 19
accusation against an elder
unless it is brought by two or
three witnesses. Those who 20
sin are to be rebuked public-
ly, so that the others may
take warning.

I charge you, in the sight 21
of God and Christ Jesus and
the elect angels, to keep these
instructions without partial-
ity, and to do nothing out of
favoritism.

Do not be hasty in the lay- 22
ing on of hands, and do not
share in the sins of others.
Keep yourself pure.

Stop drinking only water, 23
and use a little wine because
of your stomach and your
frequent illnesses.

18. For the scripture says. See note on *1 Cor. 9:9*. Paul also quotes *Luke 10:7* and calls it *scripture*. Peter includes Paul's writing in the term *scripture* (*2 Pet. 3:16*).

19. Unless it is brought. As an evangelist, Timothy might be forced to hear accusations against an elder (church leader) who would be older than himself. This is in harmony with *1 Cor. 6:5*. But he is to ignore such things unless two or three reliable witnesses bring this accusation. (This is to prevent sore-heads and troublemakers from making false charges.)

20. Rebuke publicly. "Those who are found guilty of sin, by the word of reliable witnesses, you are to rebuke in public as a warning to the others, so they may be afraid to commit similar sins." This does not conflict with *verse 1*, because it is not treating him *harshly*, but bringing the thing out into the open. Compare *Gal. 6:1*.

21. I solemnly call upon you. This is a solemn obligation which Paul places on Timothy. He must not "play favorites," but impartially deal with the matters mentioned in this Letter. Some think this implies that Paul was afraid Timothy would be too mild in dealing quickly with the problems which would come up in church life. Paul's many references to angels show that he firmly believed in the ministry of angels (*Heb. 1:14*).

22. To lay hands on. No one should be appointed to serve, until he (or she) has been thoroughly examined. A ceremony of "laying on hands" was used to *identify* those appointed for special service. Compare *1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 13:3*. [The congregation did the choosing. See *Acts 6:2-3* and notes.]

23. But take a little wine. Probably the false teachers prohibited the light wines that were then used. Compare notes on *1 Tim. 4:3; Col. 2:16; John 2:10*. This gives some indication of Timothy's state of health. The Expositor's Greek Testament has Paul saying: "I do not mean you to practice a rigid asceticism; on the contrary, I think that you are likely to injure your health by your complete abstinence from wine; so, *be no longer a water-drinker*, etc." *Johnson* says the water of that region is not good, and he spent a fearfully sick day at Ephesus in 1889 because of the water there.

²⁴The sins of some men are plain to see, and their sins go ahead of them to judgment; but the sins of others are seen only later. ²⁵In the same way good deeds are plainly seen, and even those that are not so plain cannot be hidden.

6 All who are slaves must consider their masters worthy of all respect, so that no one will speak evil of the name of God and of our teaching. ²Slaves belonging to masters who are believers must not despise them because they are their brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their work are believers whom they love.

False Teaching and True Riches

You must teach and preach these things.

The sins of some men are 24
obvious, reaching the place
of judgment ahead of them;
the sins of others trail behind
them. In the same way, good 25
deeds are obvious, and even
those that are not cannot be
hidden.

6 All who are under the
yoke of slavery should
consider their masters worthy
of full respect, so that
God's name and our teaching
may not be slandered. 2
Those who have believing
masters are not to show less
respect for them because
they are brothers. Instead,
they are to serve them even
better, because those who
benefit from their service are
believers, and dear to them.
These are the things you are
to teach and urge on them.

24. Are plain to see. This refers back to *verse 22*. Since keeping an unfit man in a place of service makes the one who appoints him responsible, in a sense, Timothy may have been very afraid he might make a mistake in such things. "In the case of some, it will be such an "open and shut case," that you will have no doubts about it. Their sins will clearly disqualify them. With others, their sins are hidden, and only time will reveal them. For this reason, don't be in any hurry to appoint people."

25. In the same way. "The good deeds of some will be so plain that you will not need to examine them very closely. Their reputations declare what they are. And even the good deeds that are not so plain will come out in time."

1. All who are slaves. Christianity is to *leaven*, not *displace*, the existing social order. Compare *1 Cor. 7:20-24* and notes. Many of the Christians were slaves. Because the Law (*Exod. 21:2*) would not allow anyone to be made a slave for life without his own consent, the Circumcision Party taught that slavery was an illegal thing, if it was *involuntary*. They used this teaching to try to entice slaves to join their Party. As an apostle, Paul condemns this false teaching. **Must consider their masters worthy.** "Christian slaves must consider their unbelieving masters worthy of all respect and obedience, so that no one will speak evil of God or the Good News. We do not want them to think Christianity destroys the political rights of individuals." We meet this same slave problem in *Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22; Tit. 2:9; Philemon; 1 Pet. 2:18*.

2. Who are believers. Christianity does not destroy social and political differences. Instead of leading slaves to rebel, it makes them better and more faithful workers. Christianity changes the attitude of masters (when they believe) and this takes the harshness out of slavery. For as masters drink in the spirit of Christianity, they will be good and kind to their slaves, and even set them free, when this seems best. But since the slave is under a moral obligation to serve his master well, this is doubly true when the master is a brother in Christ. **Teach and preach.** False teaching will wreck a congregation. Teaching and preaching the truth will combat this. See notes on *Acts 21:13-14*.

³Whoever teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the true words of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching of our religion ⁴is swollen with pride and knows nothing. He has an unhealthy desire to argue and quarrel about words, and this brings on jealousy, dissension, insults, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant arguments from men whose minds do not function and who no longer have the truth. They think that religion is a way to become rich.

⁶Well, religion does make a man very rich, if he is satisfied with what he has. ⁷What did we bring into the world? Nothing! What can we take out of the world? Nothing! ⁸So then, if we have food and clothes, that should be enough for us.

Love of Money

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and arguments that result in envy, quarreling, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

3. **Whoever teaches a different doctrine.** Compare *1 Tim. 1:3-7* and notes. The "slave problem" was an outgrowth of this (see note on *verse 1*). **And does not agree.** What Paul taught was "the true words of our Lord Jesus Christ." Compare *Luke 10:16; Gal. 1:6-9*.

4. **Is swollen with pride.** "He really knows nothing of either the Jewish or Christian revelation of God, even though he claims to completely understand both!" **Unhealthy desire to argue.** These men have a *passion* for arguments and "splitting hairs." See notes on *1 Cor. 2:1-2*. They have a morbid interest in trivial matters. Compare *Matt. 23:23-28* and notes. **And this brings on.** Their "unhealthy" attitude brings on five things: **Jealousy.** Especially about the success of Christianity, which the circumcision party felt *downgraded* the Law of Moses. **Dissension.** Compare *Phil. 1:15* and note. One who "stirs up trouble." **Insults.** Quarrels lead to *name calling* and *insults!* **Evil suspicions.** The sick imagination of people who are spiritually psychotic. Compare *3 John 10* and note.

5. **And constant arguments.** A diatribe. Bitter and constant wrangling which turns people down "blind alleys," and makes it impossible to "get on with the job." **Who no longer have the truth.** The Greek implies that the truth was *stolen* from them while they were busy with other things. Compare *Titus 1:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:3-4*. **Is a way to become rich.** The false teachers saw "easy money" in Christianity, and they *distorted* the truth to divert money into their pockets. This seemed to be especially true of the teachers who belonged to the circumcision party. Compare *Phil. 3:18-19; 2 Cor. 11:12; 12:17-18; Titus 1:11; 2 Pet. 2:3*.

6. **Well, religion does.** Paul takes their *motivation* and turns it around. Religion does make a man rich, but not in the things they wanted. *The treasures of heaven belong to you as a Christian!!!* God gave you his Son; he gave you his Spirit; he gave you his Word. He emptied heaven and gave it all to you (*1 Cor. 3:21-23*). But the real "pay-off" of Christianity comes in Eternity!!! **If he is satisfied.** See *2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:11; Matt. 6:25-34*.

7. **Nothing!** "He said, 'I was born with nothing and I will die with nothing. The Lord gave, and now he has taken away. May his name be praised!'" (*Job 1:21*).

8. **So then.** Because we must leave all material things behind when we leave this world. If we have food and clothes, we should be satisfied. However, Paul is not saying that we must take a vow of poverty, only that we must not make material wealth our goal and motivation.

⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and are caught in the trap of many foolish and harmful desires, which pull men down to ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.

Personal Instructions

¹¹But you, man of God, avoid all these things. Strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. ¹²Run your best in the race of faith, and win eternal life for yourself; for it was to this life that God called you when you made your good profession of faith before many witnesses. ¹³Before God, who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus, who made the good profession before Pontius Pilate, I com-

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Paul's Charge to Timothy

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9. **Who want to get rich.** It is not the fact of *being rich*, but **COVETING** these things. "An honest man will lead a full, happy life. But if you are in a hurry to get rich, you are going to be punished" (*Prov. 28:20*).

10. **For the love of money.** Not money itself, but the **LOVE** of it! Many misquote this. Money itself is harmless, and can be used to feed the poor, preach the gospel, etc. But the **LOVE** of money makes men cheat, lie, steal, etc., and even murder! Note the character of Judas (*John 12:6*), which eventually led him to *sell* Jesus (*Matt. 26:14-16*). **Wandered away.** *Chrysostom* explains this with the example of an absent-minded man who goes past his destination without knowing it. Some are so eager to have money, that they forget where they really want to go!

11. **Avoid all these things.** Every Christian is a man (or woman) of God. Therefore, they each must avoid the *love of money* (which the false teachers had). **Strive for.** Do your best to seize these things and make them part of your life.

12. **Run your best.** *AGONIZOU* can be translated both "fight" and "run" (in the sense of competing in a race). [A different word is used in *1 Tim. 1:18*] "*Run your best in the race*" had become a slogan of the Games. The Greek shows a continuous *running*. **And win eternal life.** Eternal life is not achieved, but seized! Even though "Christ on the cross" is the sole basis for our being "put right with God," still there is a human element in the sense that we must firmly *hold on* to Christ our Salvation!!! The false teachers had *let go*. Using the symbolism of the Games, Paul says to *win eternal life for yourself!* **Good profession of faith.** In our language, "confession" has to do with guilt. *We profess or declare* our faith in Christ. Compare *Matt. 16:16; Acts 8:37*.

13. **Before God.** This is a solemn obligation which Paul places on Timothy (and every Christian), but it is also a word of encouragement!!! **Before Pontius Pilate.** See *John 18:33-37*.

mand you: ¹⁴Obey the commandment and keep it pure and faultless, until the Day our Lord Jesus Christ will appear. ¹⁵His appearing will be brought about at the right time by God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. ¹⁶He alone is immortal; he lives in the light that no one can approach. No one has ever seen him, no one can ever see him. To him be honor and eternal might! Amen.

¹⁷Command those who are rich in the things of this life not to be proud, and to place their hope, not in such an uncertain thing as riches, but in God, who generously gives us everything for us to enjoy. ¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready

confession, I charge you to ¹⁴ keep this commandment without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will ¹⁵ bring about in his own time —God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is ¹⁶ immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Command those who are ¹⁷ rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to

14. Obey the commandment. To *obey* and to *keep* (preserve intact) are opposite sides of the same coin. I understand the commandment to be what Paul has said in *verses 11-12*. It begins with the *good profession*, in which we reach out through faith to seize Christ (See notes on *Acts 2:37-38*). *MacKnight* understands the *good profession* to be a continuous profession of faith before all mankind. **Until the Day.** Compare *1 Thess. 5:23*.

15. His appearing. In *verse 14*, Paul tells Timothy to remember that Christ is coming again. We all look forward to this! But no one knows the time when this will happen - no one but God himself (*Matt. 24:36*)! Jesus discouraged his apostles when they wanted to pry into this matter (*Acts 1:7*). **At the right time by God.** We look to the past and see there how God has worked things out at the right time. Paul reminds us of who our God is, with a doxology of praise!!! "Don't worry about *when* Christ will come! Our God will take care of that, at the right time!!!"

16. He alone is immortal. This simply means that God is entirely separate from every created thing, which includes angels and the Devil. God alone is *UNCREATE* (independently existent, without either beginning or end). [On the *Trinity*, see note on *Rom. 16:27*] **No one has ever seen him.** Moses is not a contradiction to this. Compare *Deut. 5:4-5; Gal. 3:19*. *MacKnight* says that from this text, some of the ancient fathers inferred that the Divine Person who appeared to the Patriarchs and Israelites was not the Father, but the Son. Compare note on *John 8:24*.

17. Command those. Being rich is not a sin, but being in love with this world is! *The things of this life* puts worldly wealth in the right perspective. **Not to be proud.** Here is the real danger. Pride could lead to despising others. **But in God.** He is the real source of everything we have!!! He is the only source of eternal life!!!

18. To do good. This is the right way to use worldly wealth. Honest wealth, rightly used, blesses both those who give and those who receive. Christianity teaches a new principle of life (*Eph. 4:28*).

to share with others. ¹⁹In this way they will store up for themselves a treasure which will be a solid foundation for the future. And then they will be able to win the life which is true life.

²⁰Timothy, keep safe what has been turned over to your care. Avoid the godless talk and foolish arguments of "Knowledge," as some people wrongly call it. ²¹For some have claimed to possess it, and as a result they have lost the way of faith.

God's grace be with you all.

share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposition of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

Grace be with you.

19. **In this way.** "The only way you can *take it with you* is to use it in the right way now!" This does not imply *degrees of reward*, since God awards eternal life through the merit of *Christ on the cross!!!* See notes on *Matt. 20:13-14*. Note that a wrong use of this world will disqualify us for eternal life (*Matt. 25:31-46*).

20-21. **Timothy, keep safe.** These last two verses are a summary of the entire Letter. The gospel turned over to Timothy to keep and to pass on (*2 Tim. 2:2*), is the true account of Jesus as the Son of God, the fact that he is a descendant of David and Abraham, his birth by a virgin, his teaching, his miracles, his death, his raising from death, his going back to the Father, his return to raise the dead and judge the world. In other words, it is *God's act in Christ to set men free!!!* **Knowledge.** This is the force of distortion, which began its work as soon as the Good News was preached that first Pentecost. We see it in the *circumcision party*, with their legends and long lists of names of ancestors, their false pride, and their unhealthy desire to argue and quarrel about words. Paul was a *restorationist*, because he called Christians back to the purity of the Good News!!! Compare note on *2 Tim. 2:16*.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY

The year is 67 A.D. Paul is in chains, imprisoned at Rome for the second time. This time he is not allowed to live by himself (*Acts 28:16*) but is placed in the dungeon. This Letter he writes from Rome to Timothy, is the last he will ever write. Perhaps three months after this, he will be executed (beheaded) as a criminal (armed terrorist) who had tried to destroy the city. [The Christians were made the *scapegoat* for the burning of Rome.] Peter was also executed in Rome about his same time, crucified upside-down. The uniform testimony of the early church verifies these things.

Jewish "knowledge" was a great threat to Christianity as Paul wrote these Letters to Timothy and Titus. Some of the *circumcision party* had found elements of Greek Philosophy which pleased them. The Gnostics claimed that to reach God, very special knowledge was necessary, and a strict asceticism. This permitted certain Jews to claim that the Law of Moses and the Jewish dietary restrictions gave that special knowledge and asceticism. Two evil extremes grew out of this: (1) the grace of God was turned into debauchery (see *1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-9*); (2) a legalistic asceticism (see *1 Tim. 4:3*). This was especially dangerous, because it claimed to be grounded in God's Old Testament revelation. These Scriptures were used to invent legends and lists of names to "prove" what they wanted to prove. They said Jesus Christ could not have come as a human being, since all matter (material things) was evil, and this would have involved Him in sin. Paul stresses that Jesus came as a *man* (*1 Tim. 2:5; 3:16*). See also *1 John 4:2-3*. The Letters to Timothy and Titus are a positive and healthy affirmation of the good life in Christ, who is the Wisdom of God! Read also the introduction to First Timothy.

Timothy, Paul's dear son in the gospel, is still in distant Ephesus. Paul would like to see him once more, as he writes from the dungeon. He asks Timothy to come to him (at Rome) soon! The *key* to this Letter is found in *2 Tim. 1:8*. Paul writes to help him understand the ghastly events which would make both of them martyrs for Christ! [Timothy would outlive Paul by some twenty-five years.]

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, sent to proclaim the promised life which we have in union with Christ Jesus—

2To Timothy, my dear son:

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

Thanksgiving and Encouragement

3 I give thanks to God, whom I serve with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did. I thank him as I remember you always in my prayers, night and day. **4** I remember your tears, and I want to see you very much, so that I may be filled with joy. **5** I remember the sincere faith you have, the kind of faith that your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice also had. I am sure that you

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

To Timothy, my dear son: **2**

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Encouragement to Be Faithful

I thank God, whom I serve as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I have been reminded of your sincere faith which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded, now lives in

1. From Paul, an apostle. See notes on *1 Tim. 1:1*.

2. To Timothy, my dear son. He was "true son" in the First Letter. There is a different feeling (empathy) in this Second Letter. Paul says more about love, and seems less confident about Timothy. Some think this implies that Paul had doubts about Timothy's ability to *stand up* under the problems which faced him. But I think it more probable that the reason for this difference is that Paul is under sentence of death as he writes, and he is aged. Since Paul knows he is being sacrificed (*2 Tim. 4:6*), he reaches out in love to Timothy, his dear son in the faith, whom he is about to leave behind in a very serious situation.

3. Whom I serve with a clear conscience. The *circumcision party* said Paul was a traitor to God because he preached the Good News to the Gentiles without forcing them to convert to Judaism. But Paul could say truthfully that he had a clear conscience (see note on *Acts 23:1*). He was doing what God had commanded him to do (*Acts 26:16-18*). As my ancestors did. Two thoughts are in Paul's mind: (1) the awareness of God which he inherited from his ancestors (compare *verse 5*); (2) the continuity of God's revealed Word. The same *light* of truth is in the New Covenant as the Old, but the brightness of the New is like the *sun* compared to the *moon*. Compare *Acts 26:19-23* and notes.

4. I remember your tears. Compare *Acts 20:37*; *2 Cor. 2:4*; *Phile. 7*. Timothy is Paul's dear friend!

5. I remember. Compare *Eph. 1:15*. The kind of faith. Timothy was a second-generation Christian. See note on *Acts 16:1* and introduction to First Timothy. Note also the *chain of influence* which began with this devout grandmother.

have it also. ⁶For this reason I remind you to keep alive the gift that God gave to you when I laid my hands on you. ⁷For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control.

⁸Do not be ashamed, then, of witnessing for our Lord; neither be ashamed of me, his prisoner. Instead, take your part in suffering for the Good News, as God gives you the strength for it. ⁹He saved us and called us to be his own people, not because of what we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. He gave us this grace by means of Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰but now it has been revealed to us through the coming of our Savior, Christ Jesus. He has ended the power of death, and through the Good News has revealed immortal life.

¹¹God has appointed me to proclaim the Good

you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an a-

6. **For this reason.** "Because I am sure that you do have this sincere faith." **Keep alive the gift.** This is the gift which God gave him. This means it is a supernatural gift from the Spirit. See note on 1 Tim. 4:14. The gift was evidently the ability to direct others (compare 1 Cor. 12:28 and note). **When I laid my hands on you.** Compare Acts 9:17; 10:44; 13:3; 19:6 and notes. God gave the gift when Paul laid his hands on him.

7. **Does not make us timid.** The Expositor's Greek Testament says us refers to The Christian Society (messianic community). See Rom. 8:15 and note. **Power** = courage. See Acts 4:31 and note. **Love.** Christians are not motivated by selfish spirit seen in the Jewish leaders and the Circumcision Party, who hated everybody and loved only the members of their own group. "You can only love God as much as you love your brother!" (1 John 4:20). **Self-control.** A disciplined, orderly life. Compare 1 Cor. 6:12.

8. **Do not be ashamed.** (1) of witnessing. [Witness: to attest, testify, furnish proof of, things known or believed to be true (Webster).] (2) of me. See 1 Cor. 4:8-9 and notes. The ghastly things happening to Paul are a humiliation and disgrace. Timothy cannot escape the effects of this, and must deliberately share in it for the sake of the Good News! **Instead, take your part.** "Come to Rome and share my suffering, as a good soldier of Christ. If you are ashamed of me, it will be the same as being ashamed of Christ!" Compare verse 15; 2:1, 3, 8, 9.

9. **He saved us.** "God gives us our strength! He called us to be his own people (John 6:44-45)." **Not because of what we have done.** He mentions this in Titus 3:3-5; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:8-10. Romans ch 9 examines this. **Before the beginning of time.** See Eph. 3:9-11; 1 Cor. 2:7-10 and notes.

10. **But now it has been revealed.** See Luke 1:78; 1 Tim. 2:5-7. **He has ended.** See Heb. 2:14-15. Christ is the guarantee of our eternal life!

11. **God has appointed me.** See 1 Tim. 2:7 and note.

News as an apostle and teacher, ¹²and it is for this reason that I suffer these things. But I am still full of confidence, because I know whom I have trusted, and I am sure that he is able to keep safe until that Day what he has entrusted to me. ¹³Hold to the true words that I taught you, as the example for you to follow, and stay in the faith and love that are ours in union with Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Keep the good things that have been entrusted to you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us.

¹⁵You know that everyone in the province of Asia deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶May the Lord show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, because he cheered me up many times. He was not ashamed that I am in prison, ¹⁷but as soon as he arrived in Rome he started

postle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for

12. **And it is for this reason.** This implies that the unbelieving Jews are the cause of his second imprisonment. Compare *Acts 22:21-22*; *Eph. 3:1* (which show the cause of his first imprisonment). Christ said it would be this way (*John 16:33*; *Matt. 10:34-39*). **But I am still full of confidence.** "I know the power of the One who appointed me to preach the Good News." **What he has entrusted to me.** The TEV give the correct translation, as PARATHEKE has that meaning in other places Paul uses it (*1 Tim. 6:20*; *2 Tim. 1:14*). *Spain* says this best fits the context of *verses 11-14*. *Chrysostom* understands the thing entrusted as: "the faith, the preaching of the Gospel." [If it is understood as "What I have entrusted to Him," it is Paul's entire person, body, soul, and spirit.]

13. **Hold to the true words.** This is the thing which was entrusted to Paul, and which he passed on to Timothy. These *true words* (the Christian System) are the example for him to follow (also for every Christian to follow). **Faith and love.** These are two strengths and weapons which false teachers cannot use!!! See note on *1 Tim. 1:14*.

14. **Keep the good things.** "Guard them, preserve them intact!" **Through the power of the Holy Spirit.** Paul's confidence in God (*verse 12*) is that He will supply the power (*verse 7*)! *This does not take away the human element, therefore Paul places this obligation on Timothy.*

15. **Deserted me.** *MacKnight* thinks only the teachers of the Circumcision Party are meant, possibly some who had followed him to Rome. Timothy is himself in the province of Asia, also Tychicus (*2 Tim. 4:12*). There was a real danger that the Jewish Christians would allow certain false teachers to turn them away from Christ, back to the Law of Moses (which had been superseded). **Phygelus and Hermogenes** are mentioned only here.

16. **Onesiphorus.** Paul prays for this brother's family in this *verse*, and for him in *verse 18*. Both *Johnson* and *MacKnight* think he was still living at this time. But he may also be in prison, waiting to be executed as was Paul. He had placed himself in danger by visiting Paul in prison and helping him.

17. **But as soon.** He came to Rome from Ephesus, and immediately searched through the different prisons to find Paul.

looking from me until he found me. ¹⁸May the Lord grant him to receive mercy from the Lord on that Day! And you know very well how much he did for me in Ephesus.

A Loyal Soldier of Christ Jesus

² As for you, my son, be strong through the grace that is ours in union with Christ Jesus.

² Take the words that you heard me preach in the presence of many witnesses, and give them into the keeping of men you can trust, men who will be able to teach others also.

³ Take your part in suffering, as a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ A soldier in active service wants to please his commanding officer, and so does not get mixed up in the affairs of civilian life.

⁵ An athlete who runs in a race cannot win the prize unless he obeys the rules. ⁶ The farmer who has done the hard work should have the first

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if anyone competes as an
athlete, he does not receive
the victor's crown unless he
competes according to the
rules. The hard-working 6
farmer should be the first to
receive a share of the crops.

18. **On that Day.** The Day of Judgment. Remember Paul was friendless and alone, surrounded by his enemies, when Onesiphorus came to him! Compare *Heb. 6:10*.

1. **As for you, my son.** The Circumcision Party in the province of Asia had all rejected Paul as apostle, therefore he will no longer be able to reason with them and oppose their false teaching. This *burden* must now *fall on the shoulders* of Timothy (and others like him). Paul is intensely anxious about how Timothy will act in the future. This does not mean that Paul expects him to fail, but he feels about this as a father would who sees his son go off to war.

2. **Take the words.** Paul sees *apostolic succession* as a matter of *teaching*, not of *administration*. What Paul preached was the Good News of God's act in Christ and all that formed part of this (*verse 8*). In other words, it is the entire New Testament. [Timothy died about the time the last Book was written, but he had been taught everything that would be in it.] Timothy is to pick those who can be trusted and *pass on* this message. *The seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11)*. [Note: *men* is ANTHRŌPOIS, not ANDRES.]

3. **Take your part.** A soldier must suffer as well as fight. Timothy must set an example for others to follow.

4. **A soldier in active service.** Timothy's position is unusual, because as Paul's *spiritual son*, he would be the target of the opposition. But this principle applies to every servant of God. The ministry of the Word must supersede everything else!! [But Paul could be a *tent-maker* without violating this.] Compare *2 Cor. 6:14*.

5. **Unless he obeys the rules.** An example from the games. After the race, those who had disobeyed the rules were disqualified. Compare *1 Cor. 9:27* and note.

6. **First share of the harvest.** The farmer receives his share, no matter how poor the crop may be, because he has worked. "The soldier gives up civilian life; the athlete obeys the rules; the farmer works hard and waits for the harvest. You, Timothy, must put the Lord first, suffer when necessary, and work patiently, to receive your reward (*Rev. 22:12*)."

share of the harvest. ⁷Think about what I am saying, because the Lord will enable you to understand all things.

⁸Remember Jesus Christ, who was raised from death, who was a descendant of David, as told in the Good News I preach. ⁹Because I preach the Good News I suffer, and I am even chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not in chains, ¹⁰and for this reason I endure everything for the sake of God's chosen people, in order that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. ¹¹This is a true saying:

"If we have died with him,
we shall also live with him.

¹²If we continue to endure,
we shall also rule with him.

If we deny him,
he also will deny us.

¹³If we are not faithful,
he remains faithful,
because he cannot be false to himself."

Reflect on what I am saying, ⁷for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

Remember Jesus Christ, ⁸raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure ⁹everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. ¹⁰

Here is a trustworthy ¹¹saying:

If we died with him,
we will also live with him;

if we endure,
we will also reign with him. ¹²

If we disown him,
he will also disown us;
if we are faithless,
he will remain faithful, ¹³for he cannot disown himself.

7. **Think.** "Grasp the meaning of these examples. Ask the Lord for wisdom (*James 1:5*)."

8. **Remember Jesus Christ.** He is both the great example and the source of hope! Who was raised from death. Paul is thinking of the resurrection as a personal experience of Jesus Christ (*Heb. 2:9*). A descendant of David. He made what the prophets had said come true. In the Good News. The experience of Christ is the basis of the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free (*1 Cor. 15:1-4*). The opposition fought against the idea that Christ had raised from death, and said it was only symbolic, and that our resurrection has already happened (*verses 17-18*).

9. **Because I preach.** "I have been put in this prison by the enemies of the Good News!" Is not in chains. Paul is in chains, but not the word of God!!! Even the Devil is not permitted to destroy the message of the Good News! [But see *Gal. 1:6-9* and notes.] Compare *2 Tim. 4:17; Phil. 1:12-14*.

10. **And for this reason.** "Since the work goes on!" I endure. Compare *1 Cor. 13:7*. For the sake of. MacKnight thinks Paul has in mind the Gentiles, who were his special responsibility. But see also *Rom. 9:3; Acts 21:13* and notes.

11. **This is a true saying.** This may be part of an ancient hymn. Paul uses it to reinforce what he has just said (in *verses 4-10*). If we have died with him. See *Rom. 6:4-8; Col. 2:12* and notes.

12. **If we continue to endure.** See *Rom. 8:17; Matt. 19:27-28* and notes. If we deny him. See *Matt. 10:32-33* and notes.

13. **He remains faithful.** Even if we turn away from him, he will be faithful to every promise, and every threat!!! See *Rom. 3:4* and note.

An Approved Worker

¹⁴Remind your people of this, and give them solemn warning in God's presence not to fight over words. It does no good, but only ruins the people who listen. ¹⁵Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth. ¹⁶Keep away from godless and foolish discussions, which only drive people farther away from God. ¹⁷What they teach will be like an open sore that eats away the flesh. Two of these teachers are Hymenaeus and Philetus. ¹⁸They have left the way of truth and are upsetting the faith of some believers by saying that our resurrection has already taken place. ¹⁹But the solid foundation that God has laid cannot be shaken; and these words are written on it: "The Lord knows those who are his"; and,

A Workman Approved by God

Keep reminding them of 14 these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present 15 yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid 16 godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will 17 spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered 18 away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. Nevertheless, God's 19 solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and,

14. **Remind your people of this.** The issues of life and death set out in *verses 11-13*. **Not to fight over words.** See note on *1 Tim. 6:4*. *Lipscomb* says: "They had such a morbid fondness for questionings and disputings over untaught questions and words that it amounted to a disease. These men deal with subtle, useless, and unpractical questions, which have no practical bearing on ordinary life, and only tend to stir up strife and useless discussion, and to make men discontented and rebellious."

15. **Do your best.** This is required of every Christian! [In ancient English, *study* meant *to do your best*.] **To will full approval.** "It is God whom we must please, not the Circumcision party or anyone else!" **Who correctly teaches.** This means: (1) presenting the truth clearly and accurately; (2) giving *milk* to those who need it. (Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Cor. 3:1-2).

16. **Keep away from.** See note on *1 Tim. 6:20*. *Lipscomb* says: "Everything not commanded by God in the Scriptures may safely be placed under this head." Nothing ought to be bound upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required as terms of communion and fellowship, *except* what is clearly taught and required in the Word of God. Human reasoning and opinion may be valid, but has no *authority*!

17. **What they teach.** The false teachings mentioned in *verse 16* will eat into men's souls like cancer! See notes on *1 Tim. 6:4-5*. **Hymenaeus and Philetus.** See note on *1 Tim. 1:20*. Nothing is known of Philetus. They may have denied that Jesus came as a human being, and that both his death and resurrection were not *real*. See *1 John 4:3* and note.

18. **By saying.** They said the only resurrection was a *moral resurrection of the soul*. Compare *1 Cor. 15:12* and note. These false teachers combined a believable but false spirituality (sentimentality) with an irresistible materialism.

19. **But the solid foundation.** "Even though the faith of some is upset, God's solid foundation cannot be shaken!" The church (messianic community) has an *absolute wholeness* unaffected by some who go AWOL from it!!! Compare *Rom. 9:8; 11:26*. **The Lord know those who are his.** This gives every true Christian confidence!!! *MacKnight* identifies the solid foundation as the apostles themselves (*Eph.*

"Whoever says that he belongs to the Lord must turn away from wrongdoing."

²⁰In a large house there are dishes and bowls of all kinds: some are made of silver and gold, others of wood and clay; some are for special occasions, others for ordinary use. ²¹If anyone makes himself clean from all these evil things, he will be used for special purposes, because he is dedicated and useful to his Master, ready to be used for every good work. ²²Avoid the passions of youth, and strive for righteousness, faith, love, and peace, together with those who with a pure heart call for the Lord to help them. ²³But stay away from foolish and ignorant arguments; you know that they end up in quarrels. ²⁴The Lord's servant must not quarrel. He must be kind toward all, a good and patient teacher, ²⁵who is gentle as he corrects his opponents. It may be that God will give them the opportunity to repent

"Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

In a large house there are 20 not only articles of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself 21 from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Flee the evil desires of 22 youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything 23 to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must 24 not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he 25 must gently instruct, in the hope that God will give them a change of heart leading them to a knowledge of the

2:20) and thinks these words are quoted from *Num. 16:5 Septuagint* (the Hebrew has: "the Lord will show those who are his"). **Must turn away from wrongdoing.** This shows who are His! Those who belong to the Lord must turn away from the false teachers. Compare *Rev. 18:4* and note.

20. **In a large house.** "Do not think it strange that God permits wicked teachers in his church. The church is an IDEAL, so we can expect some disloyal members to be in it." Compare *1 Cor. 12:21-26* and notes.

21. **He will be used for special purposes.** "If a teacher will cleanse himself from false teachings, false loyalties, and sinful action, God will use him for special purposes." Christians must be holy (*1 Pet. 1:16*).

22. **Avoid the passions of youth.** Here Paul means, not so much sensual passions, but such things as grandiose ambition, pride, love of power, rashness, stubbornness, etc. Some teachers avoid the sensual passions, but *fall into* these other things. **And strive for.** You must purposely seize these things and practice a positive righteousness!!! Compare *Matt. 12:43-45* and notes.

23. **But stay away from.** See *Titus 3:9-11* and notes.

24. **Must not quarrel.** He must not waste valuable time in these useless discussions. **He must be kind.** He must be a gentle and patient teacher, demonstrating the kindness which he encourages others to develop.

25. **As he corrects.** He must not use violent methods with those whom he corrects, even though they are his opponents. **That God will give.** God gives the opportunity to repent by making people *aware* of their sins. But the knowledge of God's goodness must be combined with the sense of sin, to avoid discouragement. See *2 Cor. 7:10* and note.

and come to know the truth. ²⁶And then they will return to their senses and escape from the trap of the Devil, who had caught them and made them obey his will.

truth, and that they will ²⁶ come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

The Last Days

3 Remember this! There will be difficult times in the last days. ²Men will be selfish, greedy, boastful, and conceited; they will be insulting, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and irreligious; ³they will be unkind, merciless, slanderers, violent, and fierce; they will hate the good; ⁴they will be treacherous, reckless, and swollen with pride; they will love pleasure rather than God; ⁵they will hold to the outward form of our religion, but reject its real power. Keep away

Godlessness in the Last Days

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

26. Will return to their senses. They have been *spiritually psychotic*!!! The servant of God is to attempt to rescue even the false teacher!!! See *Jude 22-23*.

1. Remember this. "I have told you before about the apostasy which is taking place (*Eph. 4:14; 2 Thess. 2:7*)." There will be difficult times. See note on *1 Tim. 4:1*. The entire Christian Age is called the last days in *Acts 2:16-17*. It does not mean the last days of the world, because Timothy was already fighting these things (*1 Tim. 6:3-5; etc.*). But Paul may also have in mind the prophecies of Christ (*Matt. 24:4-22* and notes).

2. Men will be selfish. Paul uses the word ANTHROPOI which means mankind in general (both men and women), but *verse 6* shows he is thinking especially of the false teachers. The sins mentioned in these verses have always been in the world. The new quality is that these things will be done openly and defended (as was being done right then). See *Rom. 1:28-32* and notes. All the other sins begin and end in selfishness!!! Greedy Money-mad! Boastful that he has God's approval. Conceited because he thinks God is obligated to him. Insulting in the things they say about God and his chosen people (the Christians). See *Jude 14-15*. Disobedient. Since the Jews called religious leaders and teachers parents, this could also mean rebellion against true teachers such as Timothy. Ungrateful to those who try to help them. Irreligious. The unholy. See *1 Tim. 1:9-10* and notes.

3. Unkind, brutal, inhuman, heartless. *MacKnight* ties this in with those who are forced to live a celibate life (*1 Tim. 4:3* and note), also those who force their children and others into such things. [But voluntary celibacy is an option. See *1 Cor. 7:1* and note.] Merciless. People who, when offended, will not be open to any agreement or reconciliation. Slanderers of those who speak out against their sins. Violent against any who dare oppose them. Fierce in their opposition to truth. Hate the good. They hate the good because they love the evil. See *Titus 1:8, 16* and notes.

4. Treacherous, even to their own relatives (*Matt. 10:34-36*). Reckless. Headstrong, irrational behavior caused by prejudice and hatred. Swollen with pride, so that no one can give them any advice. Love pleasure. See *2 Pet. 2:13*.

5. To the outward form. The context shows these people are members of the Lord's church (or at least they seem to be). In order to deceive their followers, they put on an outward show of godliness, and perhaps pretend to be "defenders of the Faith." Read what Jesus said in *Matt. 23:23-32*. But reject. Compare what Paul said in *1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Cor. 4:19-20*. The real power of our religion is truth and love at work in a holy life! The false teachers cut themselves off from these!!! *Lipscomb* says: "Anyone

from these men. ⁶Some of them go into homes and get control over weak women who are burdened by the guilt of their sins and driven by all kinds of desires, ⁷women who are always trying to learn but who never can come to know the truth. ⁸As Jannes and Jambres were opposed to Moses, so also these men are opposed to the truth—men whose minds do not function and who are failures in the faith. ⁹But they will not get very far, because everyone will see how stupid they are, just as it happened to Jannes and Jambres.

They are the kind who ⁶ worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but ⁷ never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as Jannes and ⁸ Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the Truth—men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get ⁹ very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

Last Instructions

¹⁰But you have followed my teaching, my conduct, and my purpose in life; you have observed my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance,

Paul's Charge to Timothy

You, however, know all ¹⁰ about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,

denies the power of godliness when he professes to honor God, but refuses to obey his commandments (*Matt. 7:21-23*).” **Keep away.** This means: (1) Avoid such people as this! (2) Do not allow such people to influence you. (3) *MacKnight* thinks it means they should be turned out of the church to protect the others, as you would remove a cancer.

6. **And get control.** These sneak into houses and seduce women into false religious practices. Paul does not mean that all women are like this, but those who have an unhealthy sense of guilt and are slaves to evil. They happily accept the false teachings which promise to allow them to sin and still be saved.

7. **Always trying to learn.** This continues *verse 6*. These women are always looking for some new thing (compare *Acts 17:21*). They listen greedily to everyone that comes along, but they never learn anything (of the truth). If truth sets you free, error keeps you a slave (*John 8:32*).

8. **As Jannes and Jambres.** These are the traditional names of Pharaoh's chief sorcerers, who opposed Moses (*Exod. 7:11*). **Opposed to the truth.** Like Elymas (*Acts 13:8* and note). Paul must mean that some of these will even do counterfeit miracles and false outpourings of the Spirit to deceive people! See *Rev. 13:13* and note. These false teachers were very deep into the occult. **And who are failures.** Paul also uses this expression in *2 Cor. 13:5*. These people have reached the stage in their apostasy that they are amoral, having lost any sense of right or wrong, good or bad.

9. **But they will not get very far.** This covers what he has been saying all the way back to *2:14*. Jewish literature says this: “As for the illusions of art magic, they were put down, and their vaunting in wisdom was reprovved with disgrace” (*Wisdom 17:7*). *Adam Clarke* says: “False doctrine cannot prevail long where the sacred Scriptures are read and studied. Error prevails only where the book of God is withheld from the people.”

10. **But you have followed.** Paul is thinking here of the point in time when Timothy obeyed the truth and became a Christian. **Teaching.** See *1 Tim. 1:11; 2:7* and notes. **Conduct.** Especially the *motivation* which lies back of it. **Purpose.** The aim or goal of his life. In becoming a Christian, Timothy had made these things his own. **My faith.** Loyalty to Christ and the truth. **Patience.** Even when annoyed (*1 Thess. 5:14*). **Love.** Compare *1 Tim. 1:5* and notes. Christian love is to treat others as God has treated you in Christ! Paul did this! **Endurance.** One who does not give up in the race until he finishes.

¹¹my persecutions, and my sufferings. You know all the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the terrible persecutions I endured! But the Lord rescued me from them all. ¹²All who want to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted; ¹³but evil men and impostors will keep on going from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in the truths that you were taught and firmly believe. You know who your teachers were, ¹⁵and you remember that ever since you were a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching

persecutions, sufferings— 11
 what kinds of things happen
 to me in Antioch, Iconium
 and Lystra, the persecutions
 I endured. Yet the Lord
 rescued me from all of them.
 In fact, everyone who wants 12
 to live a godly life in Christ
 Jesus will be persecuted,
 while evil men and impostors 13
 will go from bad to worse,
 deceiving and being de-
 ceived. But as for you, con- 14
 tinue in what you have
 learned and have become
 convinced of, because you
 know those from whom you
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 holy Scriptures, which are
 able to make you wise for sal-
 vation through faith in
 Christ Jesus. All Scripture is 16
 God-breathed and is useful
 for teaching, rebuking, cor-

11. **Persecutions.** See *verse 12*. **Sufferings.** "The misfortunes that have come my way." Compare *Rom. 8:18* and note. **You know.** Timothy was a native of Lystra and knew these things well. See the list in *2 Cor. 6:4-10*. **But the Lord.** He has not deserted His people!!! [We can paraphrase these verses: "I am not really uneasy about your strength. You joined me in Christ out of spiritual and moral motives. The persecutions and sufferings you saw me endure, you knew were part of a life that pleases God. Stand firm in the truth and in love! Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, on which your growing mind was fed, is never *out of date* or *obsolete* for equipping the servant of God!!!"]

12. **Will be persecuted.** We could almost say: "God does not want you unless you want him enough to fight for Him!" Persecution makes people evaluate their love for God. Compare *1 Thess. 3:3; John 16:33*.

13. **But evil men and impostors.** This will be true all during the Christian Age, until Christ returns!!! *Impostor* can mean sorcerer (see *verse 8*), and the Devil will COUNTERFEIT the power of God (*2 Thess. 2:9-12*). This is another reason why the WRITTEN WORD is so very important. God speaks to us through the written word! It is a yardstick by which we measure spiritual things. It should never be locked away in *archaic* language, but must be in a form easily understood (and very difficult to misunderstand) in the living language of ordinary people.

14. **But as for you.** "Don't act like these evil men and impostors!" **Who your teachers were.** "Such as me, an inspired apostle of Christ!"

15. **Ever since you were a child.** See note on *2 Tim. 1:5*. **The Holy Scriptures.** Since Timothy's parents were Christians, he would have available the Old Testament (the Septuagint in Greek) plus those Christian writings that were already in circulation (*Luke 1:1-4*). [Matthew may have been written as early as 35 A.D.]

16. **All Scripture.** The whole Sacred Scriptures. This statement will cover both the Old and New Testaments. Remember that some of the *gifts from the Spirit* made it possible to identify those writings that were inspired from those that were not inspired. So there would be no doubt on the CANON (those which make up the Old and New Testaments). **For teaching the truth.** The Good News about God's

the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, ¹⁷so that the man who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good work.

4 I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge all men, living and dead: because of his coming and of his Kingdom, I command you ²to preach the message, to insist upon telling it, whether the time is right or not; to convince, reproach, and encourage, teaching with all patience. ³The time will come when men will not listen to the true teaching, but will follow their own desires, and will collect for themselves more and more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear. ⁴They will turn away from listening to the

recting and training in righteousness, so that the man of 17 God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and

act in Christ to set men free! In other words, the whole *Christian System*. **Rebuking error.** To show what is *in error*. See *1 Tim. 5:20* and note. **Correcting faults.** To point people in the right direction by showing them how they ought to live. **Giving instruction.** So people will know both what God expects from them and what they must expect to meet along the way. This certainly includes making people aware of God's promises and blessings!!! Compare *Heb. 12:5-14* and notes.

17. **So that the man.** [ANTHROPOS.] This is the same idea as the Lord's servant (*2 Tim. 2:22-25*). The Holy Spirit *continually inspires* the Scriptures, not in the sense of giving a new revelation, but in the sense of making the revealed truth a living, vital thing!

1. **I solemnly urge you.** How impressive this message from the aged Paul, as he stands *at the edge of the grave*. "I have fully instructed you in all that you must do, and you already know the Jewish Scriptures and the things that will make up the Christian Scriptures, in which the Good News is both explained and verified. I solemnly urge you (as in *1 Tim. 5:21*) to actively carry out your mission while the opportunity lasts. Stand firm in the Faith! Fill the place which my death will leave vacant. My crown is waiting for me, and there is one for you, too, and for all who wait with love for Him to appear!" **Because of.** See *1 Thess. 5:4; Matt. 25:31*.

2. **To preach the message.** Timothy is to "shout it from the housetops!" **To insist.** "Not take no for an answer!" **Whether the time.** "Time is so short that you must use each opportunity as it comes along, and not wait for a better one." **To convince.** Especially convince false teachers of what is true. **Reproach** all who sin. **Encourage** all to live a holy life. **Teaching.** This tells how: *will all patience!* Compare *Gal. 6:1*.

3. **The time will come.** It was already there! See note on *1 Tim. 4:1*. **And will collect.** They will run from teacher to teacher until they find one who says what they are itching to hear! [They wanted some one to tell them that they could go on living in sin and still be saved!]

4. **They will.** Because they really do not want *truth*, they will turn to the legends, etc., of the false teachers. See *1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 3:7* and notes.

truth and give their attention to legends. ⁵But you must keep control of yourself in all circumstances; endure suffering, do the work of a preacher of the Good News, and perform your whole duty as a servant of God.

⁶As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed; the time is here for me to leave this life. ⁷I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, I have kept the faith. ⁸And now the prize of victory is waiting for me, the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day—and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear.

Personal Words

⁹Do your best to come to me soon. ¹⁰Demas fell in love with this present world and has deserted me; he has gone off to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

turn aside to myths. But ⁵ you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

For I am already being ⁶ poured out as a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have ⁷ fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is ⁸ in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Personal Remarks

Do your best to come to ⁹ me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only ¹⁰

5. **But you.** "You must neither fail to act nor overreact. You must calmly evaluate these things and put a stop to trouble before it begins." **Endure suffering.** "The enemies of the Good News will make you suffer!" **Do the work.** Christian leadership is based upon service (see notes on *John 13:4-5*). **Preacher** = evangelist (see note on *Eph. 4:11*). He is to preach the Good News and look after the churches. [There is some overlap between the work of the church leader (elder) and the evangelist (preacher).] **Perform.** See *verse 17*.

6. **As for me.** "I have done my best! Now my King is calling me from the field of action. You will no longer have me to depend upon." **To be sacrificed.** Paul uses a word which points out his own death as a sacrifice to God. Compare what he says in *Phil. 2:17* with *Num. 15:1-10; 28:4-8*. See also notes on *Acts 21:10-14*. See *2 Cor. 5:8* for Paul's thoughts on death.

7. **I have done my best.** The TEV translates this correctly. See note on *1 Tim. 6:12*. Paul used symbolism from the Games. **The full distance.** He did not *drop out*, but went the full distance in the race of Christian life. **I have kept the faith.** This is Paul's climax!!! This does not contradict *Phil. 3:12-16*. The life that he has lived has been "by faith in the Son of God" (*Gal. 2:20*). False modesty would be ingratitude. With the Lord's help, he has spent all his Christian life preserving intact **THE FAITH!**

8. **And now.** "All fears of death vanish when I think of the reward which God has for me!" **The crown of righteousness.** This also is from the Games where the winners received a crown of leaves as the symbol of their victory! The gold fillet worn by the High Priest was called a *crown of righteousness*. **And not only to me.** Everyone can have the same hope, if they follow Paul's example!!!

9. **To come to me.** He wants Timothy to be with him during these last days on earth.

10. **Demas.** Demas *ran out* on Paul. Demas had been much help (*Col. 4:14; Phile. 24*), and he may have been the one who "wrote down" the Letter to the Colossians. He may have been ashamed of Paul's suffering. Compare *2 Tim. 1:8*. **Crescens.** Paul does not say the Crescens or Titus *deserted* him. They were sent by Paul. Compare *Titus 3:12*.

¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he can help me in the work. ¹²I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³When you come, bring my coat that I left in Troas with Carpus; bring the books too, and especially the ones made of parchment.

¹⁴Alexander the metalworker did me great harm; the Lord will reward him according to what he has done. ¹⁵Be on your guard against him yourself, because he was violently opposed to our message.

¹⁶No one stood by me the first time I defended myself; all deserted me. May God not count it against them! ¹⁷But the Lord stayed with me and gave me strength, so that I was able to proclaim

Luke is with me. Get Mark ¹¹ and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus ¹² to Ephesus. When you come, ¹³ bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

Alexander the metalworker ¹⁴ did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your ¹⁵ guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

At my first defense, ¹⁶ no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at ¹⁷ my side and gave me strength, so that through me

11. **Only Luke.** There would be thousands of Christians in Rome at this time. Paul says "only Luke," meaning that his fellow workers and associates had all left Rome. Compare *verse 21*. **Get Mark.** This is John Mark, and he seems to be at Ephesus just now. See the introduction to Mark's Gospel. **He can help me.** Note that Paul has not quit yet!!!

12. **I sent Tychicus.** He may have taken this letter to Timothy, and replaced him at Ephesus.

13. **Bring my coat.** He will need this warm winter coat in the dungeon. This was a circular cape which would come below the knees, with a hole in the center for the head to go through. **Bring the books.** We do not know what these books were. We would expect him to have copies of the Old Testament in Greek (the Septuagint) and possibly Hebrew as well. **Parchment.** This was made from animal skins. *Benson* thinks these were letters Paul had received from the churches, and copies of his own Letters (and perhaps copies of the writings of other apostles, since Peter had certainly seen some of Paul's writings, *2 Pet. 3:15*).

14. **Alexander the metalworker.** *MacKnight* identifies him as the one who was in the riot at Ephesus (*Acts 19:33*). **Did me great harm.** If this took place at Ephesus, Timothy would already know about it. *MacKnight* thinks he must have stirred up the Gentile and Jewish unbelievers in Rome, and perhaps caused Paul's second imprisonment. **The Lord.** Paul is willing to place vengeance in the Lord's hands. Every Christian must do the same!

15. **Be on your guard.** Alexander might soon return to Ephesus. Timothy is to be on his guard wherever he meets such as this man.

16. **No one stood by me.** Paul must be speaking about his preliminary trial, which would take place when he was brought to Rome after his arrest the second time. He is writing to Timothy before his second and final trial, but he is certain what the verdict will be. This is the last year of the reign of Emperor Nero, and both Paul and Peter will die at Rome.

17. **But the Lord.** Here was the source of Paul's confidence. The Lord was with him!!! **So that I was able.** *MacKnight* thinks this means he preached the Good News to Nero himself, or at least one of his

the full message for all the Gentiles to hear; and I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸And the Lord will rescue me from all evil, and take me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

Final Greetings

¹⁹I send greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, and to the family Onesiphorus. ²⁰Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus in Miletus, because he was sick. ²¹Do your best to come before winter.

Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia send their greetings, and so do all the other brothers.

²²The Lord be with your spirit.

God's grace be with you all.

the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.

The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

representatives. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "We annex a territory by the mere act of planting our country's flag on a small portion of its soil; so in St. Paul's thought a single proclamation of the gospel might have a spiritual, almost a prophetic, significance, immeasurably greater than could be imagined by one who heard it." **The lion's mouth.** *Chrysostom* understands the lion to be Nero himself. Roman citizens were not thrown to the lions. Paul was able to speak before many Gentiles at his first trial, and the word of this would spread throughout the whole Roman Empire, especially to Gentile Christians!

18. **And the Lord.** Evidently not *from* death, but *in* death. Compare *verse 6. Into his heavenly Kingdom.* This sounds a lot like *Rev. 11:11-12*. See note on *Luke 16:31*.

19. **To Priscilla and Aquila.** Long time friends and co-workers. Some see meaning in the fact that her name is mentioned first. **Onesiphorus.** See note on *2 Tim. 1:16*. **SOME THINK THIS FORM IMPLIES THE death of Onesiphorus.** *MacKnight* says: "But Onesiphorus at this time was with the apostle in Rome, *2 Tim. 1:16-17*; or if he was gone from Rome, he might not be in Ephesus."

20. **Erastus.** Probably his home town (*Rom. 16:23*). **I left Trophimus.** These personal details were better understood by Timothy than by us. This verse proves that this Letter does not belong to the time of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, since years had passed since his last visit to Miletus, and the first Roman imprisonment. See *Acts 20:4; 21:29*.

21. **Come before winter.** In was too dangerous to sail during the winter. Compare *Acts 27:9-20*. The four names mentioned here are all of Roman character. These were all friends who lived at Rome.

22. **The Lord be with your spirit.** This is directed to Timothy. It takes on deep meaning when compared with *2 Tim. 1:7,8,14; 2:1-3,7; 3:5*. **God's grace be with you all.** Paul uses the plural form of "you" to include all who are with Timothy (the whole church), or at least those who stood firmly in the truth. *Johnson* adds: "Shortly after this Letter was written, within a few months at most, Paul had his second hearing, was sentenced to death by execution, was led out of the city at the Ostian Gate to a place called the Three Fountains, and was there beheaded. At least all early tradition [traditional history], and the Fathers, among them Clement, one of his companions, support this view."

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO TITUS

This letter was written by Paul after his first imprisonment at Rome and before his second. It was written before Paul's Second Letter to Timothy, but after First Timothy. The summer or fall of 66 or 67 A.D. is probably the time of writing.

Titus was a Greek, a Gentile. He was with Paul at the Jerusalem Meeting (*Acts 15*), although not mentioned by name. Unlike the case of Timothy,

Paul refused to permit Titus to be circumcised (*Gal. 2:1-5*). Titus is often mentioned in Paul's Letters, and took the First Letter to the Corinthians. Chrysostom identifies him with the Titus Justus of *Acts 18:7*, although there is not much evidence. In this Letter, he is left at Crete to *put things in order*. Crete is a large island, 150 miles long and about 35 miles wide. *2 Tim. 4:10* later places him at Dalmatia when Paul was imprisoned at Rome the second time. In this Letter, we have Paul asking him to come to Nicopolis, which is on the coast of Dalmatia (which is part of Illyricum).

Andreas Cretensis, who lived on Crete in the seventh century, wrote this about Titus. "Titus is related to the proconsul of the island: among his ancestors are Minos and Rhadamanthus. Early in life he obtained a copy of the Jewish Scriptures, and learned Hebrew in a short time. He went to Judea and was present at the Meeting mentioned in *Acts 15*. He became a Christian before Paul did, but afterward became his constant companion." [I have paraphrased this.]

There were Jews from Crete at Jerusalem on Pentecost (*Acts 2:11*), and some of these brought Christianity back to the island. So the church on

Crete would have a Jewish flavor (*compare Acts 21:20*). When Paul came there and won large numbers of Gentiles to Christ, problems developed with the *circumcision party*, as it had everywhere else, because they wanted to circumcise the Gentiles and force them to keep the Law. To make the Law more attractive, they went so far as to teach that you could continue to sin without fear of punishment, just so long as you kept up the sacrifices of the Law. This, of course, was just what the weak Christians wanted to hear! Paul tells Titus not to be timid, but to sharply correct these matters, and to put a stop to the false teaching of the *circumcision party*.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO TITUS

1 From Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I was chosen and sent to help the faith of God's chosen people and lead them to the truth taught by our religion, ²which is based on the hope for eternal life. God, who does not lie, promised us this life before the beginning of time, ³and at the right time he revealed it in his message. This was entrusted to me, and I proclaim it by order of God our Savior.

⁴I write to Titus, my true son in the faith that we share:

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and peace.

Titus' Work in Crete

⁵I left you in Crete for you to put in order the things that still needed doing, and to appoint church elders in every town. Remember my

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,

To Titus, my true son in our common faith:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Titus' Task on Crete

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I di-

1. **From Paul, a servant of God.** Paul often calls himself a *servant of Christ*. Compare *1 Cor. 3:5* and note. **I was chosen.** This is his authority from God. **God's chosen people.** It was always God's plan to save the Gentiles (see *Acts 15:14-18*). **Lead them to the truth.** Compare *1 Tim. 2:4*.

2. **Which is based.** The hope for eternal life is the basis for faith and truth. Compare *1 Tim. 1:16*. **Before the beginning of time.** *2 Tim. 1:9*. God's ACT in Christ to save us and bless us was decided even before Creation!

3. **And at the right time.** For centuries, only the Jew had the promise. But the FACT is revealed in Christ! Compare *1 Cor. 2:7-10*. **This was entrusted to me.** Paul's *gospel* was no second-hand thing! God gave it to him!!!

4. **I write to Titus.** This is to show that Titus has Paul's AUTHORIZATION. Titus was one of the *evangelists* (see note on *Eph. 4:11*) whom Paul trained and sent out. Others were: Timothy, Trophemus, John Mark, etc.

5. **To put in order.** Some things required *time* to complete. **To appoint church elders.** These were spiritual leaders in the local congregation, and there were always more than one. Compare *1 Tim. 3:1-7*. Note that the church at Ephesus had church elders in less than three years time (*Acts 20:17*). **In every town.** Each congregation had its own church elders and church helpers.

instructions: ⁶an elder must be without fault; he must have only one wife, and his children must be believers and not have the reputation of being wild or disobedient. ⁷For since he is in charge of God's work, the church leader should be without fault. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered, or a drunkard, or violent, or greedy. ⁸He must be hospitable and love what is good. He must be self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the message which can be trusted and which agrees with the doctrine. In this way he will be able to encourage others with the true teaching, and also show the error of those who are opposed to it.

¹⁰For there are many who rebel and deceive others with their nonsense, especially the converts from Judaism. ¹¹It is necessary to stop their talking, because they are upsetting whole families by teaching what they should not, for the shameful purpose of making money. ¹²It was a Cretan himself, one of their own prophets, who said, "Cretans are always liars, wicked beasts, and

6 rector you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to much wine, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

7
8
9
10 For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy

6. **Must be without fault.** This means he must be one of the outstanding men of the group. **Only one wife.** A married man. These qualifications are examined in the notes on *1 Tim. 3:1-7*.

7. **For since he is in charge.** In the early church, *bishop, overseer, elder, pastor* all described the same "church board" who were *in charge* of the local church. See notes on *1 Tim. 3:2-3*.

8. **He must be hospitable.** This was especially important in these violent times, when a Christian might have to *run for his life!* In general, every Christian is to develop these good qualities!!!

9. **He must hold firmly.** Strong in the TRUTH, able to teach the doctrine and show the error of opponents.

10. **Who rebel and deceive others.** In a sense, only a *Christian* can rebel or be a hypocrite. Paul points to Christian Jews (the circumcision party) as being the most guilty of things like this. Compare Paul's Letter to the Galatians.

11. **It is necessary.** These people must be stopped, not by persecution or force, but using Truth to expose their error! This is the only safe way to handle such a matter, *but it must be done in love!* **Of making money.** Neither money itself, nor the making of money, is a sin! But God did not intend religion to be used as a money-making scheme (*1 Tim. 6:3-10*). These false teachers taught that the *rites* of the Law would forgive the sins of those who *continued to sin!*

12. **It was a Cretan himself.** Epimenides, writing about 500 B. C. This implies the false teachers said they were *prophets*. Paul quotes one of their own prophets who "tells it like it is" about the character of the people of Crete.

lazy gluttons." ¹³And what he said is true. For this reason you must rebuke them sharply, so that they may have a healthy faith, ¹⁴and no longer hold on to Jewish legends and to human commandments which come from men who have rejected the truth. ¹⁵Everything is pure to those who are themselves pure; but nothing is pure to those who are defiled and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences have been defiled. ¹⁶They claim that they know God, but their actions deny it. They are hateful and disobedient, not fit to do anything good.

gluttons." This testimony is 13 true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will 14 pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. To the pure, all things are 15 pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to 16 know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

Sound Doctrine

2 But you must teach what is required by sound doctrine. ²Tell the older men to be sober, sensible, and self-controlled; to be sound in their

What Must Be Taught to Various Groups

2 You must teach what is 2 in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

13. **For this reason.** A healthy faith grows out of a holy life! Titus is to sharply rebuke their rebellion and false teaching (IN LOVE) so that they will have a healthy faith!

14. **And no longer hold on to.** Many Jewish traditions were harmless (see *Acts 21:20* and note). But these Jewish legends and human commandments fooled people into rejecting God's Truth! Compare *1 Tim. 1:4; Mark 7:4, 8; Col. 2:16-23* and notes.

15. **Everything is pure.** Compare Peter's vision (*Acts 10:9-16*), and what Paul says in *1 Cor. 6:12*. The meaning is: "The fulfilling of bodily desires is, when lawful, a *pure thing* in the case of those who are themselves *pure*; but this is *impure*, even when lawful, to those who are themselves *impure, defiled and unbelieving*." Paul is talking about Christians who make themselves *impure* by their attitude and unholy life. *MacKnight* writes: "As the Jews believed themselves the only holy people on the earth, it must have been extremely displeasing to the false teachers of that nation to find themselves represented as *polluted* like the Gentiles." *Lipscomb* writes (*on Rom. 14:1*): "A man's faith is weak when it is troubled over untaught and doubtful questions. . . . It was the duty of Christians to receive these persons of weak and morbid consciences, but not to the discussion of doubtful questions. It is sinful to disturb the peace and harmony of Christians over these untaught questions. The continual discussion of questions of this character will destroy the harmony and zeal of any congregation, and Paul instructs the church not to permit it." The churches should not give such false teachers a platform from which to speak. "Woe to those, who call the bad good and the good bad, who make the light darkness and the darkness light, who make the sweet bitter and the bitter sweet" (*Isa. 5:20* Zamenhof).

16. **But their actions deny it.** They boasted about God (compare *Rom. 2:17*), but their unholy lives proved they did not know Him! See also *2 Tim. 3:1-9*.

1. **But you must teach.** One of the "jobs" of the evangelist was to teach. See *1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:2*. **Sound doctrine.** The *truth in love* which produces a healthy faith.

2. **Tell the older men.** Turning to God meant a drastic change in their way of life. See note on *1 Thess. 1:9*. Remember these were recently living in the sins of paganism.

faith, love, and endurance. ³In the same way tell the older women to behave as women who live a holy life should. They must not be slanderers, or slaves to wine. They must teach what is good, ⁴in order to train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, and to be good housewives, who obey their husbands, so that no one will speak evil of the message from God.

⁶In the same way urge the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷You yourself, in all things, must be an example in good works. Be sincere and serious in your teaching. ⁸Use sound words that cannot be criticized, so that your enemies may be put to shame by not having anything bad to say about us.

⁹Slaves are to obey their masters and please them in all things. They must not talk back to

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them,

3. **Tell the older women.** Holy living is the general rule for all **Not be slanderers.** Not sharp-tongued gossips and busybodies. **Or slaves to wine.** Compare *1 Cor. 6:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:8*. This is a general Christian doctrine. **They must teach.** Every Christian is a teacher in a general sense, but the older women have a special responsibility to the younger women.

4. **To love their husbands.** Some think this points to newly married women. These might be more in danger of despising the physical side of marriage (see notes on *1 Cor. 7:2-5*). Men and women are not meant to compete! They work together to make a life for themselves and their children. "In three things I was beautified, and stood up beautiful both before God and men: the unity of brethren, the love of neighbors, a man and a wife that agree together" (*Ecclus. 25:1*). See also *Eph. 5:24-25*.

5. **So that no one will speak evil.** *Chrysostom* writes: "For the Greeks judge not of the doctrines by the doctrine itself, but they make the life and conduct the test of the doctrines." See also *1 Pet. 3:1-2*.

6. **Urge the young men.** That they may act sensibly in the giddy age of youth. Compare *verse 12*.

7. **You yourself.** Some think this implies that Titus was himself a young man. But whatever age, the spiritual are to set the example by their own holy living.

8. **Use sound words.** "Rebuke error sharply, but do it in a spirit of love, and be careful about making rash statements. Your purpose is to produce a healthy faith in those whom you teach." **Not having anything bad.** That is, *so that they will not have anything bad to report about us.* See *verse 10; 1 Pet. 2:12*.

9. **Slaves.** Half the world were slaves in that period of time, therefore many early Christians were slaves. There was a danger they would think their coming to Christ would free them from *civil law*. Compare *Rom. 13:1-8*. Paul's Letter to Philemon tells us something about a slave who becomes a Christian. **They must not talk back to them.** Not being arrogant or insulting to their masters; not opposing their plans and trying to sabotage their business. See *1 Pet. 2:18*.

them, ¹⁰or steal from them. Instead, they must show that they are always good and faithful, so as to bring credit to the teaching about God our Savior in all they do.

¹¹For God has revealed his grace for the salvation of all men. ¹²That grace instructs us to give up ungodly living and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this world, ¹³as we wait for the blessed Day we hope for, when the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will appear. ¹⁴He gave himself for us, to rescue us from all wickedness and make us a pure people who belong to him alone and are eager to do good.

¹⁵Teach these things, and use your full authority as you encourage and rebuke your hearers. Let none of them look down on you.

and not to steal from them, ¹⁰ but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

For the grace of God that ¹¹ brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches ¹² us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we ¹³ wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for ¹⁴ us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

These, then, are the things ¹⁵ you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

10. **Or steal from them.** Slaves have always felt tempted to steal from their owners, excusing this by saying it is owed to them for their work. **Instead, they must show.** A good slave would *advertize* his Christianity to his master by his dependability. We either give God glory, or disgrace Him, by the lives that we live!

11. **For the salvation of all men.** God's grace is the Good News of Christ! It teaches us to live holy, useful lives. Paul proves the universal need for doing right, by showing that no rank or class or race or type of man is excluded from the saving power of God's grace.

12. **That grace instructs us.** The Good News teaches us to give up ungodly living, especially atheism and idolatry, and worldly passions (1 Pet. 4:2-4). **And to live.** The Christian life is a well-behaved life. **Self-controlled.** Not a slave to bodily needs and desires (1 Cor. 6:12). **Upright.** One who does good to others (Matt. 7:12; 1 John 4:20). **Godly.** See 1 Pet. ch 2.

13. **As we wait.** [EPIPHANEIAN = appearance, coming = the blessed Day.] As *citizens of heaven*, our **BLESSED HOPE** is the Coming of Christ and our **CHANGE**, in which He will take us **HOMEL!** See Phil. 3:20. Compare 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:10.

14. **He gave himself for us.** Compare John 10:17-18; 1 Tim. 2:6. He gave himself as the *price* to buy us from the power and punishment of sin (see 1 Cor. 6:20; Col. 1:20). **Who belong to him alone.** This *symbolism* comes from Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6. Like the Jews of old, Christians are a *pure people who belong to Him alone!* They show this by being **EAGER** to do good!

15. **Teach these things.** God's Plan for saving men; Christ-on-the-cross; the blessed Day when Christ will Come; the need for holy living and good works; etc. **Use your full authority.** As an *evangelist*, he had the necessary *authority* to put in order the things that still needed doing (Titus 1:5). See note on 2 Tim. 4:5. **Let none of them.** Titus was probably older than Timothy, but he was a Gentile. The *circumcision party* in the church might be expected to *look down* on him for this reason. He is not to *let them get away with this!* He is God's servant (evangelist) and it is important both that he is respected and that he lives in such a way to command respect.

Christian Conduct

3 Remind your people to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey them, to be ready to do every good thing. ²Tell them not to speak evil of anyone, but to be peaceful and friendly, and always show a gentle attitude toward all men. ³For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, and wrong. We were slaves to passions and pleasures of all kinds. We spent our lives in malice and envy; others hated us and we hated them. ⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us. it was not because of any good works that we ourselves had done, but because of his own mercy that he saved us through the washing by which the Holy Spirit

Doing What Is Good

3 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. ²
 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the ³
⁴
⁵

1. **Remind your people.** Crete had been under Roman control for about 100 years at this time, but the people were restive! The *circumcision party* said no believer in the True God had any responsibility to the civil government and its laws, because these things were purely human. Paul had to fight against this kind of thinking everywhere he went!!! Compare *Rom. ch 13*. Christians are to be *good citizens!* Every good thing that the civil government might require them to do.

2. **Not to speak evil** of anyone because of his race or religion. **Peaceful and friendly.** A Christian is not to be *contentious*, but to keep his temper, be ready to forgive others, avoid prejudice, be honest and fair, and try to live at peace with everyone. See *James 3:17-18*.

3. **For we ourselves.** Paul speaks of "we Christians" in general, not himself. **Foolish, disobedient, and wrong.** "Even we Jews can't talk about others, because we were once foolish in our thinking about religion and the traditions handed down to us. So the very same thing is true of both Jews and Gentiles." **We were slaves.** See *1 Pet. 4:3-4*. **We spent our lives.** Remembering our own faults ought to make us more tolerant about *judging* others and keep us from severely scolding them when they fall into sin through their weakness. See *Gal. 6:1-10*.

4. **But when.** "The only reason any of us are different now, is that God our Savior acted in Christ to set us free!"

5. **He saved us.** "We could not save ourselves, so He acted to give us a way out of our doom!" See *Rom. 8:1-4* and notes. **It was not because.** We could not place an obligation on Him! **But because.** His own mercy, based on his love (*1 John 4:8-10*), is the reason why he saved us! **Through.** God requires us to reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ! Salvation is not *achieved*, but *seized!!!* God saves those who respond to his act in Christ. **The washing.** *Eph. 5:26* points this to the birth of "water and the Spirit" (*John 3:5-7 and notes*). **By which.** This is the point of contact. **The Holy Spirit.** He is the proximate contiguous source of our life. See *John 3:6* and note. **Gives us.** *Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:17*. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The verse may be paraphrased as a statement of fact thus: - God saved us by Baptism, which involves two complementary processes, (a) the ceremony itself which marks the actual moment in time of the new birth, and (b) the daily, hourly, momentarily renewing of the Holy Spirit, by which the spiritual life is supported and fostered and increased. And the moving cause of this exceeding kindness of God was not any merits of our own, but His mercy." [On (b), see note on *1 Cor. 6:11*.]

gives us new birth and new life. ⁶God poured out the Holy Spirit abundantly on us, through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that by his grace we might be put right with God and come into possession of the eternal life we hope for. ⁸This is a true saying.

I want you to give special emphasis to these matters, so that those who believe in God may be concerned with giving their time to doing good works. These are good and useful for men. ⁹But avoid stupid arguments, long lists of names of ancestors, quarrels, and fights about the Law. They are useless and worthless. ¹⁰Give at least two warnings to the man who causes divisions, and then have nothing more to do with him. ¹¹You know that such a person is corrupt, and his sins prove that he is wrong.

Final Instructions

¹²When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do

Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Final Remarks

As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your

6. **God poured out.** God showed that he would accept the Gentiles, by pouring out the Holy Spirit on them (*Acts 10:44 and note*). Joel had predicted this (*Acts 2:16-21*). Every Christian has the Holy Spirit as a gift (*Acts 5:32 and note*).

7. **We might be put right with God.** God's act in Christ makes it possible for us to change! [Justify = pronounce *not guilty*.] Compare *Rom. 2:13; 8:4* and notes. **And come into possession.** As adopted children of God, everything He has belongs to us as well!!!

8. **This is a true saying.** What he has just pointed out in *verses 4-7*. **Special emphasis.** "Belief in God is not just some idea to argue about; it is a whole new way of life! Good works help others, and they make the one who does them happy both in this world and in the next!"

9. **But avoid stupid arguments.** See note on *Titus 1:15*. The *circumcision party* were very proud of their family records, and tried to use such things to make slaves of the Gentile Christians. See *1 Tim. 1:3-4* and notes.

10. **Give at least two warnings.** Stupid arguments are dangerous things to the life of the congregation. Those who start trouble about such things must be dealt with firmly. **Then have nothing more.** This is what Jesus said to do with such a person (*Matt. 18:15-17*). But notice this is the *final* action, and you only do this after all other means have failed to get the person to respond.

11. **His sins prove that he is wrong.** It is a waste of time to argue with such a person. He is self-condemned, because his separation from the church is due to his own act. Paul would say this one is condemned by his former spiritual self. *But notice Jude 22-23*.

12. **When I send.** It was important that someone be there on Crete to replace Titus. Titus was not "bishop of Crete" in the modern sense, but a *teaching evangelist* (see note on *Eph. 4:11*), and so were

your best to come to me in Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³Do your best to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos to get started on their travels, and see to it that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Have our people learn to give their time in doing good works, to provide for real needs; they should not live useless lives.

¹⁵All who are with me send you greetings. Give our greetings to our friends in the faith.

God's grace be with you all.

best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with all of you.

Artemas (who is only mentioned here) and Tychicus. **Nicopolis.** A town in the edge of Dalmatia (Illyricum) on the west coast of Greece. It was named for the victory of Actium by the armies of Emperor Augustus. Traditional history says Paul did spend the winter there, that he was again arrested and taken to Rome where he was later executed.

13. Zenas the lawyer and Apollos. "Teachers of the Law" were often called *lawyers*. Zenas is mentioned only here. We met Apollos in *Acts 18:24*, etc. It was standard practice for congregations to help the evangelists on their travels, with money and supplies.

14. To provide for real needs. Such as mentioned in *verse 13*. Christianity teaches a "work-ethic" (see *Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:6-13*). The *gospel* does have a *social side!*

15. All who are with me. As an apostle, Paul was always a center of religious activity. It is probable that he taught a "school of preaching," in which he trained evangelists to send out. The apostle John did this. **With you all.** The form of Paul's final greeting implies he intended all the Christians on Crete to share in this Letter.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO PHILEMON

The Letters to Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians all date from Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, and were probably written in 62 A.D. This is the most personal of Paul's Letters in the New Testament. Onesimus, Philemon's slave, ran away. In Rome he met Paul, and became a Christian. Now he is going back to his master, and the fact that he is, shows the strong influence Christianity has! But as a "runaway," he is a criminal! Yet he comes back to Philemon as a *brother in Christ!* This makes it a "whole new ball-game!" Paul writes this Letter to Philemon to persuade him to accept Onesimus as a brother in Christ, not as a runaway slave.

This type of thing must have happened many times in the early church. Slavery was the foundation of the economy in the early world. Aristotle, one of the greatest Greek Philosophers, said that most of the human race were made by the Creator to be slaves. Half the world of the First Century were slaves. Roman law made a slave an animal with no rights at all. His master could sell him, give him away, torture him, kill him, drown him in the sea - all legally! Roman law would not interfere in the matter. Even the Jewish Law permitted slavery, but it set rules for it that prevented cruelty. If a Jew mutilated his slave, the slave was automatically set free. The teachers of the Law said a runaway slave must make good the time of his absence. This may be what Paul had in mind in *verses 18-19*.

Christianity did not prohibit slavery, but its teaching killed it in time. Christianity says: "So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus" (*Gal. 3:28*). These were radical ideas! But this TRUTH of the "brotherhood of man" (*Acts 17:26*) could not leave the world unchanged!!!

This Letter shows us that Christianity does not change man's political or social condition and rank. Onesimus the slave did not become a free-man by obeying Christ. In all this we have practical lessons on Christian conduct. We also have examples of love and concern for others. We see Paul, an apostle of Christ, putting in a good word for a slave, to make peace between he and his master.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

¹From Paul, a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy—

To our friend and fellow worker Philemon, ²and the church that meets in your house, and our sister Apphia, and our fellow soldier Archippus:

³May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴Every time I pray, brother Philemon, I mention you and give thanks to my God. ⁵For I hear of your love for all God's people and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. ⁶My prayer is that our fellowship with you as believers will bring about a deeper understanding of every blessing which

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your home:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your love and faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in

1. **From Paul, a prisoner.** He is a prisoner at Rome as he writes this, but living in his own house (*Acts 28:16 and note*). Our brother Timothy. This shows us that Timothy was at Rome with Paul. **Philemon.** This man must have lived in Colossae. Paul had brought him to Christ (*verse 19*), but this may have taken place at Ephesus (Johnson thinks so). They were friends and fellow workers in the gospel. Probably Paul intends to point to the fact that all Christians, even slaves and masters, are fellow workers.

2. **And the church.** House-churches were common in the first century, but they also met in the temple (*Acts 2:46*), and in other buildings (*Acts 19:9-10*). **Apphia.** She may have been Philemon's wife. "Sister" may, like "brother" Timothy, point to one who takes an active role in the gospel. Compare *Rom. 16:12*. **Archippus.** Some think he was Philemon's son. "Fellow soldier" shows he was a minister in the gospel (evangelist). He is mentioned in *Col. 4:17*. Meyer points to the fact of Paul in those associated with Philemon in the house, but not going beyond the limits of the house.

3. **Give you grace and peace.** This is Paul's usual word of greeting. In Jewish theology, one main purpose of the Messiah was to bring grace and peace (*see Luke 2:14*).

4. **Every time I pray.** Here he begins to speak directly to Philemon. Paul made it a habit to pray for God's people.

5. **For I hear of your love.** Note Paul puts Philemon's love ahead of his faith.

6. **Our fellowship with you.** Bengelius thinks this means Philemon partaking of faith in common with other Christians. A deeper understanding. *See Phil. 1:9-11* and notes.

we have in our life in Christ. ⁷Your love, dear brother, has brought me great joy and much encouragement! You have cheered the hearts of all God's people.

A Request for Onesimus

⁸For this reason I could be bold enough, as your brother in Christ, to order you to do what should be done. ⁹But love compels me to make a request instead. I do this even though I am Paul, the ambassador of Christ Jesus and at present also a prisoner for his sake. ¹⁰So I make a request to you on behalf of Onesimus, who is my own son in Christ; for while in prison I have become his spiritual father. ¹¹At one time he was of no use to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me.

¹²I am sending him back to you now, and with him goes my heart. ¹³I would like to keep him here with me, while I am in prison for the gospel's sake, so that he could help me in your place.

Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints. 7

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. 8 9 10 11

I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for 12 13

7. **Your love.** By this Paul must mean Philemon's *active Christian life*. Paul speaks about the moment of jubilation he experienced when he heard the good news about Philemon and the messianic community at Colossae (probably brought by Epaphras, *Col. 1:7-8*).

8. **I could be bold enough.** Since he has heard so much about the love which Philemon has, he has confidence in what he *would do*, to just go ahead and order him to accept Onesimus. This would be his right as an apostle.

9. **But love compels me.** "Yet love compels me not to use my authority, but to make a request instead. I have the right to order you, but I will not do this." [The TEV follows Lightfoot in reading ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΣ = ambassador.]

10. **Who is my own son in Christ.** It is possible that Epaphras met Onesimus in Rome, and brought him to Paul. However, it was Paul who won him to Christ and became his spiritual father.

11. **At one time.** Onesimus may have been a troublemaker in the past. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "As applied to Onesimus the reference must be to something wrong done by him; the fear of being punished for this was presumably his reason for running away from his master." **But now.** The "old" Onesimus no longer exists (*2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:6-7*). He will serve Philemon as a good slave now!

12. **I am sending him.** This means: "Onesimus wants to come back to you now, and I am sending him." **And with him goes my heart.** This shows the close friendship between Paul and Onesimus. To be cruel to him would be cruel to Paul as well.

13. **To keep him here.** "I am the ambassador of Christ. Since I know you would help me if you were here, Onesimus your slave could help me in your place. And I would like to keep him here, since he has already been so much help to me."

¹⁴However, I do not want to force you to help me; rather, I would like for you to do it of your own free will. So I will not do a thing unless you agree.

¹⁵It may be that Onesimus was away from you for a short time so that you might have him back for all time. ¹⁶And now he is not just a slave, but much more than a slave: he is a dear brother in Christ. How much he means to me! And how much more he will mean to you, both as a slave and as a brother in the Lord!

¹⁷So, if you think of me as your partner, welcome him back just as you would welcome me. ¹⁸If he has done you any wrong, or owes you anything, charge it to my account. ¹⁹Here, I will write this with my own hand: *I, Paul, will pay you back.* (I should not have to remind you, of course, that you owe your very life to me.) ²⁰So, my brother, please do me this favor, for the Lord's sake; cheer up my heart, as a brother in Christ!

the gospel. But I did not 14
want to do anything without
your consent, so that any
favor you do will be sponta-
neous and not forced. Per- 15
haps the reason he was
separated from you for a
little while was that you
might have him back for
good—no longer as a slave, 16
but better than a slave, as a
dear brother. He is very dear
to me but even dearer to
you, both as a man and as a
brother in the Lord.

So if you consider me a 17
partner, welcome him as you
would welcome me. If he has 18
done you any wrong or owes
you anything, charge it to
me. I, Paul, am writing this 19
with my own hand. I will pay
it back—not to mention that
you owe me your very self. I 20
do wish, brother, that I may
have some benefit from you
in the Lord: refresh my heart

14. **However.** Paul could have kept Onesimus and Philemon would surely have pardoned him. But this might not have been the ethical way to do it. Paul sends him back to Philemon, so that it is clearly his *free will* when he takes Onesimus back into his *family*.

15. **It may be.** "I know it made you unhappy when your slave ran away, but think about this. This may be God's providence at work. He will now be your slave for life." [Some see a reference to *Deut. 15: 16-17* in this.]

16. **He is not just a slave.** Here is the vital difference in the slave - master relationship!!! This slave is now a *brother in Christ* to his master. **How much he means to me!** To prevent any possibility of Philemon being offended because Paul is telling him his slave is his *brother*, Paul mentions the Christian love which also binds him to this slave as a *brother*.

17. **Welcome him back.** Christian love means: "*to treat others as God has treated you.*" Paul says to treat this slave just as if he were Paul himself.

18. **Charge it to my account.** Some think this implies Onesimus had robbed Philemon, but this is not necessarily so. It was enough of a crime to run away.

19. **I, Paul, will pay you back.** This is Paul's *promissory-note* guaranteeing repayment. These are not empty words! This is a legal form! Roman law would enforce this, if Philemon put in the claim. **You owe your very life to me.** Paul had led him out of the guilt and power of sin, into the safety of Christ! Yet Paul will not make this an *obligation* to force him to take back his slave.

20. **Please do me this favor.** By cheerfully doing what I ask.

²¹I am sure, as I write this, that you will do what I ask—in fact I know that you will do even more. ²²At the same time, get a room ready for me, because I hope that God will answer the prayers of all of you and give me back to you.

Final Greetings

²³Epaphras, who is in prison with me for the sake of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings, ²⁴and so do my fellow workers Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke.

²⁵May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

in Christ. Confident of your 21
obedience, I write to you,
knowing that you will do
even more than I ask.

And one thing more: pre- 22
pare a guest room for me,
because I hope to be restored
to you in answer to your
prayers.

Epaphras, my fellow 23
prisoner for Christ Jesus,
sends you greetings. And so 24
do Mark, Aristarchus, De-
mas and Luke, my fellow
workers.

The grace of the Lord 25
Jesus Christ be with your
spirit.

21. **I am sure.** "As I write this letter, I am sure you will do even more than I ask." Some see in this a hint of the *authority* which Paul actually had (compare *Acts 13:8-12*). Some also see in this a hint that Philemon would give Onesimus his freedom.

22. **At the same time.** All the Letters written during the first imprisonment show that Paul expected to be set free from his confinement. [Contrast this with *2 Tim. 4:6*.]

23. **Epaphras.** See notes on *Col. 1:7; 4:12*. He was also in prison with Paul. *SUNAICHMALOTOS* means "a prisoner of war." But Paul may only mean that Epaphras was with him in his imprisonment.

24. **My fellow workers.** These are also in Rome with him. **Mark.** See the introduction to the Gospel of Mark. **Aristarchus.** See *Acts 27:2*. **Demas.** See note on *Col. 4:14*. **Luke.** See introduction to the Gospel of Luke.

25. **With you all.** Paul's benediction is to all mentioned in this Letter including all who make up the church in Philemon's house. See *verses 2-3*.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

The *key word* of this Letter is GREATER! To prevent some from turning away from Christ and returning to the Law of Moses, the writer of this Letter shows: (1) The Son is *greater* than the prophets! (2) The Son is *greater* than the angels! (3) The Son is *greater* than Moses! (4) The Son is a *greater* High Priest than Aaron, because He is in the priestly order of Melchizedek! (5) The New Covenant is *greater* than the Old Covenant! It demands more and promises more! (6) If you *turn away* from the Son, you have NOWHERE to go! To abandon Christ is to abandon God!!!

The Jewish leaders tried to discredit both the Messiahship and Divine Sonship of Jesus of Nazareth. The *excuse* they gave for this was: (1) He was a *man*, a mere human being; (2) He had no earthly kingdom (which they expected the Messiah to have), and he was put to death; (3) He became a man by being born a helpless baby. They seemed to think the Messiah would suddenly appear - *full grown* (compare *John 7:27* and note); (4) Because he was tempted and suffered, just as we all do. *Hebrews* answers these questions, and should forever take away the "offensiveness of the Cross!"

The only question about this Letter is: "Who wrote it???" Did Paul write it? Probably, but no one can know for sure. It is not signed, as Paul's letters were. *Origen* wrote in the early part of the Third Century: "If I gave my opinion, I should say that the thoughts are those of the Apostle, but the phrasing and composition are those of some one who remembered what the teacher had said. If then any church holds this Epistle [Letter] to be Paul's, let it be commended for this. For not without reason have our predecessors handed it down as Paul's. But who wrote the Epistle, in truth God knows. The account that has reached us is, that some say it was writ-

ten by Clement who became bishop of the Romans, while others ascribe it to Luke, the author of the Gospel and Acts." This whole question of the authorship is examined in great detail in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*.

When was it written??? From *Heb. 10:1-2* we infer that the Temple was still standing and the sacrifices of the Law were still being offered. *R. Milligan* thinks Paul wrote it during the first imprisonment at Rome. *Ramsay* gives 62 A.D. as the year of Paul's release, so it would be around that time. *Heb. 13:23* seems to verify both that date and the authorship of Paul.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE HEBREWS

God's Word through His Son

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. ³He shines with the brightness of God's glory; he is the exact likeness of God's own being, and sustains the universe with his powerful word. After he had made men clean from their sins, he sat down in heaven at the right side of God, the Supreme Power.

The Son Greater than the Angels

⁴The Son was made greater than the angels, just as the name that God gave him is greater

The Son Superior to Angels

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

1. **In the past God spoke.** God did not disclose his will to the ancients *all at once*, but in "bits and pieces." With only a few exceptions (such as Melchizedek, Balaam, and Job), God spoke only to the prophets of the Jewish Nation. One part of God's will was to be learned from one prophet, another part would come through a different one. Over 1,500 years passed, from Moses to Christ. The Old Testament was not complete until the last word of Malachi was written.

2. **But in these last days.** Peter identifies the *last days* as beginning on Pentecost (*Acts 2:16-17*). **He has spoken.** The importance of the message is shown by the Messenger! Not a prophet, but the Son of God! Paul says this to show us that the Good News, spoken *all at once* through Christ (and his apostles, *John 14:26*), was complete and no additions would ever be made to it. Compare what Paul says in *Gal. 1:6-9*. [The New Testament records in permanent form the Good News which came through Christ.] **Through whom God created.** Compare *John 1:3*; *Col. 1:15-20*. **The universe.** See *verse 10*; *Heb. 11:3*. **Whom God has chosen.** This must be understood in view of *1 Cor. 15:24-28*.

3. **With the brightness.** See *John 1:14*; *Matt. 17:1-9*. **The exact likeness.** See *1 John 1:1-4*. **And sustains the universe.** As Creator, Christ spoke the universe into existence, and all things (*Col. 1:17*) have their proper place in union with him, as he sustains them with the same powerful word by which he created them. **Made men clean.** By his bloody death. Compare *2 Cor. 5:14-21*; *1 Pet. 2:24*; *1 Cor. 15:3*; *Gal. 2:20*. **He sat down in heaven.** See *Eph. 1:20-21*. **The right side** is the place of special honor. Jesus sitting down at God's right side is mentioned five times in this Letter, because it *presupposes* the raising of Christ from death, and is a clear proof that Jesus is the divine Son of God!

4. **Was made greater.** The Jews were very proud of the Law of Moses, because it has been given through angels (*Deut. 33:2*; *Acts 7:53*; *Gal. 3:19*; *Heb. 2:2*). Some said Jesus was himself an angel and had no real human nature (compare *1 John 4:2-3*). **That God gave him.** The name *Son* was not his until God gave it to him by the Incarnation (*Heb. 10:5*; *John 1:14*). This is *inheritance* in the sense of his *Messianic Sonship*. The Old Testament is a witness of the fact of his *Sonship*.

than theirs. ⁵For God never said to any of his angels,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.”

Nor did God say to any angel,

“I will be his Father,
and he shall be my Son.”

⁶When God was about to send his firstborn Son into the world he also said,

“All of God’s angels must worship him.”

⁷This is what God said about the angels,

“God makes his angels winds,
and his servants flames of fire.”

⁸About the Son, however, God said:

“Your throne, O God, will last forever
and ever!

You rule over your kingdom with
justice.

⁹You love the right and hate the wrong;
that is why God, your God, chose you
and gave you the joy of an honor far
greater
than he gave to your companions.”

For to which of the angels ⁵
did God ever say,

“You are my Son; Today
I have become your
Father”?

Or again,

“I will be his Father, and
he will be my Son”?

And again, when God brings ⁶
his firstborn into the world,
he says,

“Let all God’s angels wor-
ship him.”

In speaking of the angels he ⁷
says,

“He makes his angels
winds, his servants
flames of fire.”

But about the Son he says, ⁸

“Your throne, O God, will
last for ever and ever,
and righteousness will be
the scepter of your king-
dom.

You have loved righteous-
ness and hated wicked-
ness; therefore God,
your God, has set you
above your companions
by anointing you with the
oil of joy.” ⁹

5. Never said to. “God does not use this language to angels, but He does say this to the Son!” [God became the FATHER of Christ in the miraculous act of generation which took place prior to the Virgin Birth. See *Luke 1:35*.] The first quotation is from *Psalms 2:7*; the second is from *2 Sam. 7:14*. His Sonship is proved by his raising from death! See *Rom. 1:4*; *Acts 13:32-33*. In fact, the birth of Christ would be no more “greater than the angels” than the creation of Adam, were it not for the Resurrection! The whole FACT of the Messiahship stands or falls with the Resurrection (as Paul shows in *1 Cor. 15:12-20*). [See also notes on *1 John 5:6*.]

6. When God was about to send. Chrysostom, Calvin, Bengel, Bruce, et. al., think this refers to the time when Jesus was born at Bethlehem. *MacKnight* thinks this refers to the Second Coming. Whatever time, it shows that Christ is superior to the angels, since they must worship him! A footnote on the NIV says this quotation is found: “*Deut. 32:43* (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scrolls); *Psalms 97:7*.”

7. About the angels. The quotation is from *Psalms 104:4* Septuagint. The *Expositor’s Greek Testament* says: “The writer accepts the LXX translation and it serves his purpose of exhibiting that the characteristic function of angels is service, and that their form and appearance depend upon the will of God.”

8. About the Son, however. The quotation is from *Psalms 45:6-7*. Remember that one of the gifts from the Spirit which every apostle had, was inspired understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures. Your throne, O God. The angels are servants; the Son has an eternal throne!!! Notice the Son is here called God. Compare what Jesus said in *John 8:24*. You rule. The whole point is that the Son is a Divine King with an eternal throne. See *1 Cor. 15:25-28* and notes.

9. You love the right. His choosing is said here to be the result of his good qualities which equip him to rule as God’s representative. The whole quotation should be taken as a general statement of Christ being supreme over all!!!

- ¹⁰He also said,
 “You, Lord, in the beginning created the earth,
 and with your own hands you made the heavens.
¹¹They will all disappear, but you will remain;
 they will all grow old like clothes.
¹²You will fold them up like a coat,
 and they will be changed like clothes.
 But you are always the same,
 and you will never grow old.”
¹³God never did say to any of his angels:
 “Sit here at my right side,
 until I put your enemies
 as a footstool under your feet.”
¹⁴What are the angels, then? They are all
 spirits who serve God and are sent by him to help
 those who are to receive salvation.

The Great Salvation

2 That is why we must hold on all the more
 firmly to the truths we have heard, so that we

He also says, 10
 “In the beginning, O
 Lord, you laid the founda-
 tions of the earth,
 and the heavens are the
 work of your hands.
 They will perish, but you 11
 remain; they will all wear
 out like a garment.
 You will roll them up 12
 like a robe; like a gar-
 ment they will be
 changed.
 But you remain the same,
 and your years will never
 end.”
 To which of the angels did 13
 God ever say,
 “Sit at my right hand un-
 til I make your enemies
 your footstool!”
 Are not all angels minister- 14
 ing spirits sent to serve those
 who will inherit salvation?

Warning to Pay Attention

2 We must pay more care-
 ful attention, therefore,
 to what we have heard, so
 that we do not drift away.

10. He also said. This is from *Psalms 102:25-27*. **Created the earth.** See *verse 2* and notes. This is to prove that angels had nothing to do with Creation. It also proves that the evil god (Satan) had nothing to do with Creation. See notes on *1 Tim. 4:4*.

11. But you will remain. “Although the material creation seems so SOLID yet it will disappear, but You will still be there!!!”

12. You will fold them up. Earth and sky will be folded like a coat. See *2 Pet. 3:10-13*. **But you are always the same.** The Son is eternal. He was always with the Father, He will always be with the Father. The Son (as the Logos) is UNCREATE! Not so the angels, who are a type of Creation.

13. God never did say. None of the angels are given authority to rule the earth. Angels are servants (*verse 4*). **Sit here at my right side.** This is quoted from *Psalms 110:1*. What God never did say to any of his angels, He did say to the Son. **The right side** is the place of honor. **Until I put.** See *Acts 2:35; 1 Cor. 15:25-28* and notes.

14. What are angels, then? “Rather than ruling as kings over this Universe, angels are spirits who serve God, and are sent to help those who are to receive eternal life.” Note the contrast: Christ rules; angels serve. *MacKnight* says: “The apostle does not say *minister to*, but *for them*, etc. The angels are ministers [servants] who belong to Christ, not to men, though employed by him for the benefit of men. Therefore this passage affords no ground for believing that every heir of salvation has a guardian angel assigned to him. Of the ministry of angels for the benefit of the heirs of salvation, we have many examples, both in the Old and in the New Testament.”

1. That is why. Because God speaks to us through his Son. **We must hold on.** “We must seize the Truth spoken through the Son, and firmly hold on to it!” **So that.** The symbolism is a *swiftly flowing flood*. In our *boat*, we must make some effort to row against the flood to keep from being swept away by it.

will not be carried away. ²The message given by the angels was shown to be true, and anyone who did not follow it or obey it received the punishment he deserved. ³How, then, shall we escape if we pay no attention to such a great salvation? The Lord himself first announced this salvation, and those who heard him proved to us that it is true. ⁴At the same time God added his witness to theirs by doing signs of power, wonders, and many kinds of miracles. He also distributed the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his will.

The Leader to Salvation

⁵God did not place the angels as rulers over the world he was about to create—the world of which we speak. ⁶Instead, as it is said somewhere in the Scriptures:

“God, what is man, that you should think
of him;
mere man, that you should care for
him?”

For if the message spoken by 2
angels was binding, and
every violation and disobedi-
ence received its just punish-
ment, how shall we escape if 3
we ignore such a great salva-
tion? This salvation, which
was first announced by the
Lord, was confirmed to us by
those who heard him. God 4
also testified to it by signs,
wonders and various mir-
acles, and gifts of the Holy
Spirit distributed according
to his will.

Jesus Made Like His Brothers

It is not to angels that he 5
has subjected the world to
come, about which we are
speaking. But there is a 6
place where someone has
testified:

“What is man that you
are concerned about
him, or the son of man
that you should care for
him?”

2. **The message given by angels.** This is the Law of Moses. See note on *Heb. 1:4*. Those who did things which the Law prohibited, or who failed to do all that the Law commanded, were severely punished!

3. **How, then, shall we escape?** “Christ is greater than the angels; and this means the Good News is greater than the Law. If those who did not pay attention to the Law were punished severely, how can we expect to escape if we pay no attention to the message and salvation given through the Son?” **The Lord himself.** The Good News is the message spoken by Christ (see *John 14:26*). See also *Luke 9:31* and notes. **And those who heard him.** Eyewitnesses (especially the apostles) verified the message of the Good News as they spread this throughout the world. (*Col. 1:23*). **Us** = Christians in general. See *1 John 1:1-4*.

4. **God added his witness.** The Law of Moses was authenticated by miracles (*Heb. 12:18-21*). The gospel was equally authenticated by the miracles which went side by side with the preaching of Christ and his apostles. Compare *Rom. 15:18-19*.

5. **God did not.** The TEV is clearer here. Christ created the earth (see *Heb. 1:10*), and he did not create it for angels, but for mankind, as the next verse shows. Remember: Christ in his incarnation is the *representative man*, the Second Adam. [Johnson sees in this the difference between the Jewish Age (which they called *the present world*) and the Christian Age (which the Jews called *the world to come*). See also *Matt. 19:28* and note.]

6. **Instead.** This is from *Psalms 8:4-6* Septuagint. **What is man?** *MacKnight* says this is Adam, who represents all mankind. **Mere man** = the son of man = all the descendants of that first man (so *MacKnight* says). On “Son of Man” as a messianic title, see notes on *Luke 22:69-70*. God’s *valuation* of the worth of mankind is shown in *Christ on the Cross!!!*

⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
you crowned him with glory and honor,
⁸and made him ruler over all things."

It says that God made man "ruler over all things"; this clearly includes everything. But we do not see a man ruling over all things now. ⁹But we do see Jesus! For a little while he was made lower than the angels, so that through God's grace he should die for all men. We see him crowned with glory and honor now because of the death he suffered. ¹⁰It was only right that God, who creates and preserves all things, should make Jesus perfect through suffering, in order to bring many sons to share his glory. For Jesus is the one who leads them to salvation.

¹¹He makes men pure from their sins, and both he and those who are made pure all have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to

You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet."

In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to

7. **For a little while.** Mankind, in this world which is under the curse, is for a little while lower than the angels. Christ, in taking our human nature (*Rom. 8:3; Heb. 10:5; 2:14*), became, like us, a little lower than the angels. But in his Resurrection, he became higher than the angels (*verse 9; Phil. 2:6-11*). **Lower than the angels.** This is the way it reads in the Septuagint. The Hebrew says: "lower than God (Elohim)." **You crowned him.** This speaks of mankind, as the next verse shows. Compare *Gen. 1:28*.

8. **Ruler over all things.** This is the point of the quotation. All things (except God, *1 Cor. 15:27*) were placed under man's rule in *Gen. 1:28*. But we do not see our human race in control over all things now. Compare *Gen. 3:16-19*. In the Incarnation (*John 1:14*), Christ took our human limitations.

9. **But we do see Jesus!** The TEV correctly makes this the climax of the apostle's reasoning. The hope of mankind is not angels, but Jesus!!! He is the Second Adam who brings us life!!! See *Rom. 5:14-18*. **For a little while.** Jesus had to share our humanity to die for all men. Compare *1 Cor. 15:22-23; Matt. 25:31-33*. Every man and woman has the right to be put right with God through Christ (*Rev. 22:17; John 6:45*). **We see him crowned.** "We do not see man in control, but we do see Jesus crowned with glory and honor by his raising from death and his going up to heaven to sit at God's right side. His death is not a thing of disgrace, but rather the means of our being made the friends of God (*Col. 1:18-20; 1 Cor. 1:23-24* and notes)."

10. **It was only right.** "You should not be surprised that God would save man by means of the death of Christ." **Should make Jesus perfect.** Not perfectly holy, since he was already sinless. But perfectly prepared to be our Savior. The rest of this chapter explains this. **For Jesus is the one.** "In the guided tour of life, Jesus is the one who leads us to our destination, which is salvation and life eternal! Jesus is the Pioneer because he opened a new way through his body of flesh (*Heb. 10:20*)."

11. **He makes men pure.** He makes men pure when they reach out through faith to seize his sacrifice and make themselves part of it. He continually is making men pure, on the basis of the one sacrifice which he made on the Cross. **All have the same Father.** Christians are twice-born (*John 3:5* and note). Our New Birth makes us part of God's Family (*Rom. 8:15-17*). **That is why.** "Christ does not act like a 'doctor among lepers,' but he calls men his brothers!!! Because of the Incarnation, He is one of us!!!"

call them his brothers. ¹²As he says,
 "God, I will speak about you to my
 brothers;
 I will praise you before the whole
 gathering."

¹³He also says, "I will put my trust in God." And
 he also says, "Here I am with the children that
 God has given me."

¹⁴Since the children, as he calls them, are
 people of flesh and blood, Jesus himself became
 like them and shared their human nature. He did
 so that through his death he might destroy the
 Devil, who has the power over death, ¹⁵and so set
 free those who were slaves all their lives because
 of their fear of death. ¹⁶For it is clear that it is
 not the angels that he helps. Instead, as the
 scripture says, "He helps the descendants of
 Abraham." ¹⁷This means that he had to become
 like his brothers in every way, in order to be their
 faithful and merciful high priest in his service to
 God, so that the people's sins would be forgiven.

call them brothers. He says, ¹²

"I will declare your name
 to my brothers; in the
 presence of the congrega-
 tion I will sing your
 praises."

And again, ¹³

"I will put my trust in
 him."

And again he says,

"Here am I, and the chil-
 dren God has given me."

Since the children have ¹⁴
 flesh and blood, he too
 shared in their humanity so
 that by his death he might
 destroy him who holds the
 power of death—that is, the
 devil—and free those who all ¹⁵
 their lives were held in
 slavery by their fear of
 death. For surely it is not ¹⁶
 angels he helps, but Abra-
 ham's descendants. For this ¹⁷
 reason he had to be made
 like his brothers in every
 way, in order that he might
 become a merciful and faith-
 ful high priest in service to
 God, and that he might
 make atonement for the sins

12. **As he says.** This is from *Psalms* 22:22 Septuagint. **I will praise you.** HUMNEO: to praise; to sing; to keep talking about. See note on *Eph. 5:19*. The point is that Jesus is not ashamed to share *humanity* or *humanness*, and call men (including women) his brothers!

13. **He also says.** This quotes *Isa. 8:17*. He shows his *brotherhood* with *man* as he speaks his trust in God. **And he also says.** This quotes *Isa. 8:18*. This shows both that He was to come in human form, and that He makes himself the brother of the *saved*.

14. **Jesus himself.** As mankind are all people of flesh and blood, Jesus the Logos shared the human nature that we all have in common. **He did so.** He took flesh and blood, to destroy the Devil by means of his own death on the Cross. **Destroy the devil** by canceling his power. He did this through his *raising from death*. See *John 10:17-18*.

15. **And so set free.** In sharing death, the final horror which all must face, Christ completely shared the human experience. By raising from death he added a *new dimension* of hope. Not only does he make it possible for us to be forgiven our sin and be changed from the enemies of God into the friends of God, but he also is the **GUARANTEE** that we shall survive death!!! See *1 Cor. 15:20*.

16. **It is not the angels.** MacKnight understands this: "Moreover, by no means doth he take hold of the angels who sinned, to save them; but of those who are the seed of Abraham by faith he taketh hold, to deliver them from death, and to conduct them to heaven." **The scripture says.** "He helps the descendants of Abraham" is a quotation from *Isa. 41:8-9* Septuagint.

17. **This means.** He had to share completely our human nature and experience. See *Heb. 4:15; Rom. 8:3*. **Would be forgiven.** See *verse 14*. As High Priest, he offered the sacrifice of his own death so that the people's sins would be forgiven.

¹⁸And now he can help those who are tempted, because he himself was tempted and suffered.

Jesus Greater than Moses

3 My Christian brothers, who also have been called by God! Think of Jesus, whom God sent to be the High Priest of the faith we profess. ²He was faithful to God, who chose him to do this work, just as Moses was faithful in his work in God's whole house. ³A man who builds a house receives more honor than the house itself. In the same way, Jesus is worthy of much more glory than Moses. ⁴Every house, of course, is built by someone—and God is the one who has built all things. ⁵Moses was faithful in God's whole house as a servant, and spoke of the things that God

of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus Greater Than Moses

3 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be

18. **Because.** Because he has experienced all these things himself, he is able to help those who are tempted. Compare *Matt. 4:1-11* and notes. Note that temptation itself is not sin, but it can lead into sin.

1. **My Christian brothers.** The usual New Testament meaning of this is "fellow Christians," including both men and women. **Who also.** God calls us through the message of the Good News (*John 6:44-45*). The Jews were called to a promised land here on earth; Christians are called by God to Eternity! **Think of Jesus.** "Think what these great truths about Jesus mean. He is the Son, and the High Priest. Let your minds penetrate deeply into the significance of these facts." **Whom God sent.** *Apostle* means: one who is sent on an important mission. In this sense, Moses was sent by God. But Christ was sent *from heaven* by God!!! *1 John 4:14*. **To be the High Priest.** Jesus both brought the message from God and is also High Priest. **The faith we profess.** "Our belief in Christ (compare *Matt. 16:16*), which sets us apart from non-Christian Jews."

2. **He was faithful.** He completed the mission which God sent him to do. See *John 17:4*. **Just as Moses.** This is the language of *Num. 12:7*. *MacKnight* says the point is: "As Moses was faithful in forming all parts of the Jewish church (God's house at that time); just so Christ was faithful in forming the *gospel church* to SUPERSEDE the Jewish church."

3. **A man who builds a house.** Even though Jesus is similar to Moses in being faithful, still he receives more honor and glory than Moses. The next verses explain this. [Note that God's house is built out of living stones (*Eph. 2:20-22; Matt. 16:18*).]

4. **Every house.** *MacKnight* words this: "Besides, every religious society is formed by someone; But he who hath formed all righteous communities and religious societies, is God; Who having delegated his authority to his Son, hath made him Lord of all."

5. **As a servant.** Here is the real difference between Moses and Christ! Moses was a servant in the Jewish church. He accurately carried out the mission which God gave him; because the Jewish church was a prophecy of what God would say in the future; that is, in Christ's church.

would say in the future. **‘But Christ is faithful as the Son in charge of God’s house. We are his house, if we keep our courage and our confidence in what we hope for.**

A Rest for God’s People

⁷So then, as the Holy Spirit says,

“If you hear God’s voice today,

⁸Do not be stubborn as you were when you rebelled against God, as you were that day in the desert when you put him to the test.

⁹There your ancestors put me to the test and tried me, says God, even though they saw what I did for forty years.

¹⁰For that reason I was angry with those people and said,

“They are always disloyal, and refuse to obey my commands.”

¹¹I was angry and made a solemn promise: “They shall never come in and rest with me!”

said in the future. But **6** Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Warning Against Unbelief

So, as the Holy Spirit says: **7**

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your **8** hearts

as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested **9** and tried me, and for forty years saw what I did.

That is why I was angry **10** with that generation, and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’

So I declared on oath in **11** my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

6. As the Son. God’s *house* is the *church* = the religious *community* of God’s people. Moses was a servant, Christ is the Son. When Christ *superseded* the Jewish church constructed by Moses, and built his new *gospel church* (messianic community) which would *include* all nations, he used his authority which belonged to him as the Son. **We are his house.** See *Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:5.* **If we keep.** Again the human element is stressed! Even though Jesus *paid it all*, God requires us to live a new life. See *Matt. 7:21-23;* and notes on *law* at the end of *Rom. 3:31.* It would be possible to forfeit our salvation (*Heb. 6:4-6*).

7. So then. “Be warned by the example of Israel!” **As the Holy Spirit says.** The Spirit speaks to us through the written Word. This quotation is from *Psalms 95:7-11* Septuagint. **If you hear.** (1) The fact that the Jewish church has been superseded does not terminate God’s offer of salvation. (2) The two great turning-points in *salvation* are: the giving of the Old Covenant; the giving of the New Covenant. Don’t make the same mistake which Israel did when the Old Covenant was given!

8. Do not be stubborn. Compare *Exod. 16:3; 17:1-7.* “After seeing the *hand of God* in Egypt, they still were stubborn and rebelled against God. Don’t you make that same mistake!”

9. There your ancestors. They annoyed God by their rebellion. Even though he gave them food and water by supernatural means, they still would not love Him.

10. For that reason. God was angry and disgusted with the very people He had saved! Their attitude (heart) was bad.

11. I was angry. In scripture, human body-parts and human emotions are used as figures-of-speech to communicate to us His way of doing things, in a form which we can understand. **GOD IS SPIRIT! They shall never!** The whole generation (except Joshua and Caleb) was refused entrance into Canaan! To get an idea of how many people this represented, see *Num. 1:1-3, 46.* There were 603,550 men over age twenty, who could fight in an army.

¹²My brothers, be careful that no one among you has a heart so bad and unbelieving that he will turn away from the living God. ¹³Instead, in order that none of you be deceived by sin and become stubborn, you must help one another every day, as long as the "Today" in the scripture applies to us. ¹⁴For we are all partners with Christ, if we hold on firmly to the end the confidence we had at the beginning.

¹⁵This is what the scripture says:

"If you hear God's voice today,
do not be stubborn as you were
when you rebelled against God."

¹⁶Who heard God's voice and rebelled against him? All the people who were led out of Egypt by Moses. ¹⁷With whom was God angry for forty years? With the people who sinned, who fell down dead in the desert. ¹⁸When God made his solemn promise, "They shall never come in and rest with me"—of whom was he speaking? Of those who rebelled. ¹⁹We see, then, that they were not able to go in because they did not believe.

See to it, brothers, that 12
none of you has a sinful, un-
believing heart that turns
away from the living God. 13
But encourage one another
daily, as long as it is called
Today, so that none of you
may be hardened by sin's
deceitfulness. We have come 14
to share in Christ if we hold
firmly till the end the confi-
dence we had at first. As has 15
just been said:

"Today, if you hear his
voice,
do not harden your
hearts
as you did in the
rebellion."

Who were they who heard 16
and rebelled? Were they
not all those Moses led out
of Egypt? And with whom 17
was he angry for forty years?
Was it not with those who
sinned, whose bodies fell in
the desert? And to whom did 18
God swear that they would
never enter his rest if not to
those who disobeyed? So we 19
see that they were not able to
enter, because of their
unbelief.

12. **Be careful.** "This example of sin and punishment should teach you a lesson. You will be sinning just as they did if you reject the gospel, or if having once accepted it, then renounce it."

13. **Instead.** "Instead of trying to turn each other away from Christ, you must help one another to believe!" **Today.** While it is "Today," God's offer of salvation is in effect. But it also implies that it may be withdrawn at any time. Sin makes a man *blind* to the attractiveness of God's *offer!* (Remember this is written to Christians. See *verse 14.*)

14. **Partners with Christ.** Compare notes on *verse 6* **At the beginning.** See *Heb. 6:4-6; 11:1; Rom. 5:1-2.*

15. **This is what.** *Psalms 95:7-8* Septuagint. See notes on *verse 7.*

16. **Who heard?** The answer is: *all the people.* But see notes on next *verse.*

17. **With whom.** Note that these people continued to rebel against God during the whole forty year's time. **Who fell down dead.** The whole generation who escaped from Egypt in the Exodus, died in the desert! [But there were a few exceptions: Joshua and Caleb are mentioned by name in *Deut. 1; Num. 34:17* and *Joshua 24:33* show Eleazar and perhaps some or even all of the Levites were allowed in.]

18. **When God made his solemn promise.** *Num. 14:22-23; Psalm 95:11.* "To show you the sin of rebellion, I ask you to whom did God make this solemn promise: 'They shall never come in and rest with me'? It was those who had seen his miracles, but because they did not believe, they refused to go into the land of Canaan."

19. **They were not able to go in.** If *unbelief* made it impossible for the Israelites to go into the land of Canaan, then *unbelief* will close the gates of heaven to those who have already started on their way! They did not believe God could bring them into the promised land in spite of the fierce opposition they would face; and so they would not attempt to conquer it when God told them to go forward. These Hebrew Christians were in danger of *dropping out* of the battle, and so losing all they had won!

4 Now, God has left us the promise that we may go in and rest with him. Let us fear, then, so that none of you will be found to have failed to go in to that rest. ²For we have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message but it did them no good, because when they heard it they did not receive it with faith. ³We who believe, then, do go in and rest with God. It is just as he said,

"I was angry and made a solemn promise:
"They shall never come in and rest with me!"

he said this even though his work was finished from the time he created the world. ⁴For somewhere in the Scriptures this is said about the seventh day, "God rested on the seventh day from all his works." ⁵This same matter is spoken of again: "They shall never come in and rest with

A Sabbath-rest for the People of God

4 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

"So I declared on oath in my anger,
"They shall never enter my rest."

And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "and on the seventh day God rested from all his work." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

1. **Let us fear, then.** "Since the Israelites were not allowed in because of their unbelief, we should fear that the same thing could happen to us, and be careful that we go all the way into the promised land!"

2. **Just as they did.** The Good News to them was the promise of Canaan. The Good News to us is Eternity! Compare *2 Pet. 3:13*. But it did them no good. Their failure to believe God, disqualified them! [On faith, see note on *James 2:19*.]

3. **We who believe, then.** "If their unbelief disqualified them, then we who believe *will be* qualified to go in and rest with God." As he said. See *Heb. 3:11* and note. Even though. God intended man to go in and rest with him. If they do not do this, it certainly is not because God left his work unfinished! The sabbath is symbolic of this Eternal Rest, yet keeping the sabbath is not the same as entering into that Rest.

4. **About the seventh day.** The Sabbath is Saturday (see *Matt. 28:1* and note). The quotation is from *Gen. 2:2*. The sabbath had special meaning for the Jews (*Deut. 5:15*). Yet the rest of the seventh-day-Sabbath was not the rest which Israel was denied, nor the rest which we who believe do go into. God rested = God completely rested, because his work was finished.

5. **This same matter.** Again he quotes *Psalms 95:11* Septuagint. "This shows that a rest different from the one in Canaan, was promised to Abraham's descendants. This rest would be forfeited by unbelief, but seized by believing!"

me.” ⁶Those who first heard the Good News did not go in and rest with God because they did not believe. There are, then, others who are allowed to go in and rest with God. ⁷This is shown by the fact that God sets another day, which is called “Today.” He spoke of it many years later by means of David, in the scripture already quoted,

“If you hear God’s voice today,
do not be stubborn.”

⁸If Joshua had led the people into God’s rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹As it is, however, there still remains for God’s people a rest like God’s resting on the seventh day. ¹⁰For whoever goes in and rests with God will rest from his own works, just as God rested from his. ¹¹Let us, then, do our best to go in and rest with God. We must not, any of us, disobey as they did and fail to go in.

¹²The word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together.

It still remains that some ⁶ will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore ⁷ God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before:

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given ⁸ them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, ⁹ then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone ¹⁰ who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let ¹¹ us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

The word of God is living ¹² and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and

6. **Those who first heard.** God does not experiment or make mistakes. The very fact that he created a rest proves that some will go in and rest. Those who first heard the Good News of this rest did not go in. But those who do believe (like Joshua and Caleb), will be allowed to go in and rest.

7. **This is shown.** Long after Israel had gone into Canaan, God spoke to them through David. These words quote *Psalms 95:7-8* Septuagint. This shows that the words to the Israelites in the desert were not only for them, but was a command for mankind in all ages of time (when properly understood).

8. **If.** [Note that Joshua and Jesus are different forms of the same Hebrew name.] “If God’s promise had been completely made to come true by Joshua leading the people into Canaan, there would be no reference to another day! Yet David speaks of another day!”

9. **There still remains.** “Since neither the Sabbath nor Canaan made God’s promise come true, it still remains for God’s people to receive this rest.”

10. **Will rest from his own works.** In other words, God’s people will not go in and rest until their time of testing and suffering is completed. Compare *Rev. 14:13*.

11. **Let us, then.** “Since there is the possibility of going in and resting with God, we should do our best to seize it! We should not disbelieve and disobey as the Israelites did, and be turned away and disqualified!”

12. **The word of God.** The Israelites were turned away when they refused to hear and believe. The message of the Good News calls us to go into God’s Rest. This word is alive and active, because of its influence on us (compare *1 Pet. 1:22-23*). It is sharper. It cuts in all directions. *Phocylides* said: “Reason is a weapon that penetrates deeper into a man than a sword.” To where soul and spirit meet.

It judges the desires and thoughts of men's hearts. ¹³There is nothing that can be hid from God. Everything in all creation is exposed and lies open before his eyes; and it is to him that we must all give account of ourselves.

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴Let us, then, hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we have a great high priest who has gone into the very presence of God—Jesus, the Son of God. ¹⁵Our high priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy with our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a high priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. ¹⁶Let us be brave, then, and come forward to God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it.

marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all 13 creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Jesus the Great High Priest

Therefore, since we have 14 a great high priest who has gone into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high 15 priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then 16 approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

We ordinarily say *soul* when we mean *spirit*. *PSUCHE* means: *soul, self, inner life, one's inmost being; (physical) life; that which has life, living creature, person, human being*. The writer of this Letter sees man as a *triune being*, as does Paul in *1 Thess. 5:23*. These three parts are: a *body* of flesh and blood; a *sentient soul* ["In whose hand is the soul of everything living, and the spirit of all human flesh." *Job 12:10* from Zamenhof's version of the Masoretic Hebrew]; a *rational spirit*. The meaning of this whole verse is: "The word of God coming to men in the message of the Good News, offering the highest kind of good, tests their real desires, motivations, and goals. This is an infallible test of whether a person truly loves and searches for the good; or repudiates it as his eternal inheritance."

13. **There is nothing.** *MacKnight* sees here a reference to the symbolism of the Jewish *burnt offering*, where the animal was skinned, ripped open, eviscerated, and its backbone split. This was symbolic that nothing was hidden in the one for whom the sacrifice was offered. Unfaithfulness, disloyalty, and hypocrisy, no matter how carefully hidden, cannot be concealed from our Judge!!!

14. **Hold firmly.** "The unbelieving Jews say the gospel has neither a High Priest nor any sacrifice for sin; and they urge you to turn away from Christ and go back to the Law. But hold firmly to the faith! We have a great High Priest who has gone into the very presence of God!!!" See also *Heb. 9:11-14*.

15. **Our high priest.** "Even though our High Priest is the Son of God, he can feel sympathy with our weakness." **Who was tempted.** Our technological age creates no new temptations, but only brings the old temptations closer to us. In his earthly experience, Jesus met and conquered everything that we will ever face! Compare *Heb. 2:17-18* and notes.

16. **Let us be brave.** "Because of the High Priest we have, we can be brave and come forward to God's throne (which Judaism does not make possible)!" **There we will receive.** Everything is ours in Christ!!! See *1 Cor. 3:21-23*. Judaism nor any other religion has anything to offer that we do not *already* have in Christ!!! Compare *James 1:5*.

5 Every high priest is chosen from his fellowmen and appointed to serve God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²Since he himself is weak in many ways, he is able to be gentle with those who are ignorant and make mistakes. ³And because he is himself weak, he must offer sacrifices not only for the sins of the people but also for his own sins. ⁴No one chooses for himself the honor of being a high priest. It is only by God's call that a man is made a high priest—just as Aaron was called.

⁵In the same way, Christ did not take upon himself the honor of being a high priest. Instead God said to him,

"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father."

⁶He also said in another place,

"You will be a priest forever,
in the priestly order of Melchizedek."

5 Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him,

"You are my Son;
today I have become
your Father."

And he says in another place,

"You are a priest forever,
just like Melchizedek."

1. **Every high priest.** "To prove that Jesus is a real High Priest, I will first describe a high priest of Judaism." **Chosen.** Such as Aaron and all the high priests of Israel. **On their behalf.** God does not need a high priest, but people do. **To offer.** As a lawyer stands between his client and the court, so the high priest stands between the people and their God. The gifts and sacrifices were offered either by the high priest in person, or by his direction.

2. **Since he himself is weak.** He has been chosen from among his fellowmen, so he understands them perfectly, because he himself shares their weakness. Compare *Gal. 6:1*.

3. **And because.** As a human being, the Jewish high priest had to offer sacrifices for his own personal sins first. See *Lev. 16:6*. Notice the symbolism in the high priest's vestments (*Exod. 28*).

4. **No one chooses for himself.** "To apply these things to Jesus, notice first that no high priest chooses himself. God chooses him, just as He chose Aaron." See *Exod. 28:1; Lev. 8:2-5*.

5. **Christ did not take upon himself.** "In the gospel church, no one appoints himself High Priest. God appointed Christ, just as he had appointed Aaron." **God said to him.** The quotation is *Psalms 2:7*. The time is when Jesus was raised from death. See note on *Heb. 1:5*.

6. **He also said.** "As God has called Christ to be High Priest, he also says that Christ will not be a priest like Aaron, but like Melchizedek." The quotation is from *Psalms 110:4*. **Melchizedek.** The priesthood of this man was *discrete* as he stood alone and isolated. He was not part of a series of high priests, as was Aaron. *Heb. 7:1-10* explains this in more detail.

⁷In his life on earth Jesus made his prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to God, who could save him from death. Because he was humble and devoted, God heard him. ⁸But even though he was God's Son he learned to be obedient by means of his sufferings. ⁹When he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him, ¹⁰and God declared him to be high priest, in the priestly order of Melchizedek.

During the days of Jesus' ⁷ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the One who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although ⁸ he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered, and once made ⁹ perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and ¹⁰ was designated by God to be high priest, just like Melchizedek.

Warning against Falling Away

¹¹There is much we have to say about this matter, but it is hard to explain to you, because you are so slow to understand. ¹²There has been enough time for you to be teachers—yet you still need someone to teach you the first lessons of God's message. Instead of eating solid food, you

Warning Against Falling Away

We have much to say ¹¹ about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by ¹² this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's Word all over again. You need milk,

7. **In his life on earth.** "As High Priest, Jesus can sympathize with our weakness, because since he took our human nature, he experienced the fear of death that we humans have. His human nature recoiled from the Cross, just as ours would." **Because.** This points to the time in the garden (*Matt. 26:36-46* and notes). Luke says an angel came and strengthened him. *MacKnight* understands this to mean: "delivered him from fear."

8. **But even though.** "He was not exempt from suffering, just because he was God's Son. He learned first-hand how difficult it is for men to obey God. He learned this by experience, and he also learned what kind of help men need to help them *stand in the whirlwind*."

9. **When he was made perfect.** He was already a perfect man, but he became a perfect High Priest! He became the source. *Christ on the cross* is where our salvation comes from! See *1 Cor. 1:23-25* and notes. **Who obey him.** He does not save the disobedient. Compare *Matt. 7:21-23; James 2:19*.

10. **And God declared him.** *MacKnight* thinks this refers to the time when Jesus went back to heaven and sat down at God's right side. See notes on *verse 6; 7:1-10*.

11. **There is much.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "No doubt the reference is not barely to Melchizedek, but to Melchizedek as type [model, pattern] of Christ's priesthood." The problem is not the hidden secrets of Melchizedek, if there are any, but the fact that his readers are *spiritually retarded!* More is said about Melchizedek in *chapter 7*.

12. **There has been enough time.** "Enough time has passed since you became Christians, that you should have matured to the extent you could teach others. Yet here you are, needing someone to teach you the ABC's of the Good News!" [They may have been Christians for twenty or thirty years at this time.] **You still have to drink milk.** "You are not capable of using the more complete knowledge of Christianity!" Compare *1 Cor. 3:1-4* and notes.

still have to drink milk. ¹³Anyone who has to drink milk is still a child, without any experience in the matter of right and wrong. ¹⁴Solid food, on the other hand, is for adults, who have trained and used their tastes to know the difference between good and evil.

6 Let us go forward, then, to mature teaching and leave behind us the first lessons of the Christian message. We should not lay again the foundation of turning away from useless works and believing in God; ²of the teaching about baptisms and the laying on of hands; of the raising of the dead and the eternal judgment. ³Let us go forward! And this is what we will do, if God allows.

not solid food! Anyone who ¹³ lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food ¹⁴ is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

6 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity. Let us not lay again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, ² the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God ³ permitting, we will do so.

13. **Is still a child.** "One who knows only the *letter* of the Old Testament is unskilled in the knowledge of the Good News." See *Rom. 10:6-8; Gal. 3:24*.

14. **Who have trained and used their tastes.** "The child must eat whatever is given to it; the boy is warned what to eat and what to avoid; as he grows, he learns by his experience, so that when he is grown, he does not need an instructor or a priest to tell him what is good and what is poisonous. This Letter shows the first evidence of maturity is the ability to teach; the second, knowing the difference between good and evil in things that are being taught. The one implies the other.

1. **Let us go forward.** "You lay the foundation for the purpose of building on it!" **To mature teaching.** "You do not progress away from God's act in Christ to set men free. You progress into it!" **And leave behind us.** "Let us leave behind the ABC's of the Good News and get into the deeper meanings of these things, and of the symbolism and prophecies of the Law." This is a *call* to advance to perfectness in Christ! This is our goal (*Eph. 4:13-15; Rom. 12:1-2*), even though we must still fight our weak human nature (*Rom. 7:14-25; Phil. 3:12-14*). The human element requires our cooperation! **We should not lay again.** "You have already laid the foundation. Now you must build on it!" **Turning away.** *Repent* means to *turn away* from useless works of sin that lead to death, and *turn* to God. **Believing in God.** See *Acts 16:31-33*.

2. **About baptisms.** The Law had many baptisms or immersions of the body in water. Jewish Christians would connect these with Christian baptism in their thinking (see notes on *Acts 19:3*). The basic idea in them is *purity*. Compare *Heb. 10:22*. **The laying on of hands.** *Johnson* sees in this the gifts from the Spirit by the apostles's hands (*Acts 8:17*). But Jewish Christians might also connect it with the ritual of laying hands on the sacrifice being offered in the Temple. **Of the raising.** One of the first lessons of the Good News. It formed an important part of preaching the message (*Acts 17:18*). **The eternal judgment.** This went along with the raising of the dead. Compare *Jude 14-15*.

3. **Let us go forward.** This is the *point* they must learn! **If God allows.** This does not imply any doubt that God will allow it, but rather being aware that success depends upon God's will (compare *1 Cor. 16:7*).

⁴For how can those who fall away be brought back to repent again? They were once in God's light. They tasted heaven's gift and received their share of the Holy Spirit. ⁵They knew from experience that God's word is good, and they had felt the powers of the coming age. ⁶And then they fell away! It is impossible to bring them back to repent again, because they are nailing the Son of God to the cross once more and exposing him to public shame.

⁷God blesses the ground that drinks in the rain that often falls on it, and that grows plants that are useful to those for whom it is cultivated. ⁸But if it grows thorns and weeds it is worth nothing; it is in danger of being cursed by God, and will be destroyed by fire.

It is impossible for those 4
who have once been enlight-
ened, who have tasted the
heavenly gift, who have
shared in the Holy Spirit,
who have tasted the good-
ness of the word of God and 5
the powers of the coming
age, if they fall away, to be
brought back to repentance,
because to their loss they are
crucifying the Son of God all
over again and subjecting
him to public disgrace.

Land that drinks in the 7
rain often falling on it and
that produces a crop useful
to those who farm it receives
the blessing of God. But 8
land that produces thorns
and thistles is worthless and
is in danger of being cursed.
In the end it will be burned.

4. **For how can.** "Here is what you face if you do not *go forward!* God's mercy does not fail, and we are sure of that! But there is a sin that cannot be forgiven, not because God would not forgive it, but because the one who does it does not believe he has sinned." (See notes on *Matt. 12:31-32*). **To repent again?** These are not *inactive members* (backsliders), but *apostates* who have repudiated Jesus. They have destroyed their moral ability to repent! **They were once.** These had been genuine Christians. They had seen God's light (*John 8:12*) and reached out through faith to seize it and make themselves part of it! **They tasted.** They had experienced in their own lives the effect of this *newness* in Christ. **And received their share.** Every Christian is a Spirit-filled Christian. Compare *Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19-20*. But it is possible to restrain the Spirit (*1 Thess. 5:19*). God does not save you against your will!

5. **From experience.** They had studied the teachings and promises of the Good News, and believed them! **Of the coming age.** Remember this was written to Jews. They called the age of the Messiah: *the coming age*. They would understand this to be speaking of the Christian age. Since the Holy Spirit was mentioned in *verse 4*, *MacKnight* thinks the *powers* are the ability of the Good News to convert people to Christ. Compare *Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Thess. 1:9* and notes.

6. **And then they fell away!** *Beza* in his Latin version made it read: "If they fall away," because he did not believe it possible for Chosen People to *fall away*. But a warning about something which could not happen would be meaningless! *Johnson* says the phrase means: "Apostatize from the faith." **To bring them back.** These people have now decided in their own minds that Jesus was an impostor, a phony, who deserved the death that he died. For this reason, they have renounced the gospel, and there is no way to reach them! **Because they are nailing.** By renouncing Christ, they place themselves with those who nailed Christ to the cross! **And exposing him.** "It is a fatal step to renounce Christ! Men who left the church of Christ (the messianic community) and went back to the synagogue, became companions of people who thought they were doing God honor by cursing the name of Jesus." This is an *eternal sin*. See note on *Matt. 12:32*. Note that this can result from *FAILING* to go forward!!!

7. **God blesses the ground.** "I will show you this example from nature which teaches the doom of those who do not go forward." **Plants that are useful.** If the ground produces good fruit, more time is spent on it. Compare *John 15:1-10*.

8. **Thorns and weeds.** If the ground will only grow thorns and weeds, it has no real value to the farmer. If your life produces only thorns and weeds, God cannot use you!

⁹But even if we speak like this, dear friends, we feel sure about you. We know that you have the better blessings that belong to your salvation. ¹⁰God is not unfair. He will not forget the work you did, or the love you showed for him in the help you gave and still give your fellow Christians. ¹¹Our great desire is that each one of you keep up his eagerness to the end, so that the things you hope for will come true. ¹²We do not want you to become lazy, but to be like those who believe and are patient, and so receive what God has promised.

God's Sure Promise

¹³When God made the promise to Abraham, he made a vow to do what he had promised. Since there was no one greater than himself, he used his own name when he made his vow. ¹⁴He said, "I promise you that I will bless you and give you many descendants." ¹⁵Abraham was patient, and so he received what God had promised.

Even though we speak like ⁹
 this, dear friends, we are
 confident of better things in
 your case—things that ac-
 company salvation. God is ¹⁰
 not unjust; he will not forget
 your work and the love you
 have shown him as you have
 helped his people and con-
 tinue to help them. We want ¹¹
 each of you to show this
 same diligence to the very
 end, in order to make your
 hope sure. We do not want ¹²
 you to become lazy, but to
 imitate those who through
 faith and patience inherit
 what has been promised.

The Certainty of God's Promise

When God made his ¹³
 promise to Abraham, since
 there was no one greater for
 him to swear by, he swore by
 himself, saying, "I will surely ¹⁴
 bless you and give you many
 descendants." And so after ¹⁵
 waiting patiently, Abraham
 received what was promised.

9. **We feel sure about you.** "We speak, like this to warn you of the dangers, but this does not mean that we think you have failed." **We know.** We can see in your actions the *evidence* that you are following Christ."

10. **God is not unfair.** God will bless the ground that has already grown good plants. Their Christian activities and practical charities will not be forgotten. **In the help.** *MacKnight* thinks this points especially to helping the persecuted Christians in Judea.

11. **Our great desire.** "We want you to keep up the eagerness you have already demonstrated by your actions. This is why you must go forward! The prize comes at the end of the race!"

12. **We do not want.** There was a real danger that they would *become* lazy and allow themselves to drift away from the Truth. **But to be like those.** (1) Like the Christian Gentiles; (2) Like those mentioned in *chapter 11*. **And so receive.** God requires people to *trust and obey*. Those who receive the promise are those who believe and are patient.

13. **He made a vow.** "When I say to be like the Christian Gentiles, it is because they will receive what God has promised equally with the Jews. In fact, God's *sure promise* is illustrated by Abraham."

14. **He said.** *Gen. 22:17*. **I will bless you** by accepting your faith as righteousness (*Rom. 4:22*). **And give you many descendants** who will be your spiritual children and also be accepted as righteous through their faith. Compare *Gal. 3:26-29*.

15. **Abraham was patient.** *Patience* is obedient endurance. Even though things did not happen immediately (as Abraham might have expected), he was patient because he **EXPECTED** God to keep his promise. His actions showed that he did believe God!!! At the right time, God made his promise come true.

¹⁶When a man makes a vow he uses the name of someone greater than himself, and a vow settles all arguments between men. ¹⁷God wanted to make it very clear to those who were to receive what he promised that he would never change his purpose; so he added his vow to the promise. ¹⁸There are these two things, then, that cannot change and about which God cannot lie. So we who have found safety with him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope that is placed before us. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for our hearts. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary. ²⁰Jesus has gone in there before us, on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek.

Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, just like Melchizedek.

The Priest Melchizedek

7 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God. As Abraham

Melchizedek the Priest

7 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and a priest of God Most High. He

16. **When a man makes a vow.** A *vow* is a promise made while calling on (invoking) a person, place, or thing as *witness* (attestant) to the fact that you will fulfill your promise or commitment. This is also called *swearing an oath* (compare *Matt. 5:33-37; 23:16-22; James 5:12*). **Settles all arguments.** The vow is accepted as a *guarantee*.

17. **God wanted.** "To show us in a way we could understand, God added his vow to the promise. This means he would never change his *purpose* in which he promises to accept men as righteous because of their faith, and to give them the heavenly country.

18. **These two things.** God's promise and his vow. Neither of these could ever be broken. **Are greatly encouraged.** "We have escaped from the guilt and fear of punishment which makes the Law a curse. We have found safety with Him as we hold firmly to the hope of forgiveness which God promised us and confirmed by His vow."

19. **Hope as an anchor.** "As the storms howl around the ship, the anchor holds firm in the unseen world below the surface. Just so, hope reaches through the curtain into the inner sanctuary (the *true* Most Holy Place) and takes hold in the presence of God himself! Our Christian hope is anchored in Eternity!"

20. **Jesus has gone in.** As the Jewish high priest went through the curtain into the Most Holy Place in the earthly temple, Jesus has gone into heaven itself and sits at God's right side! By doing this, he has anchored our hope of forgiveness and eternal life, and we hold firmly to it! See *Heb. 10:20*. **He has become.** Unlike the Jewish high priest, Jesus is a high priest forever!! This is explained in the next chapter.

1. **This Melchizedek.** This picks up the explanation where it stopped in *Heb. 5:11*. Melchizedek is a *mystery-man*, but part of the problem is failing to understand the *Hebrew idiom* and reading too much into the words. Remember that the Jews were extremely accurate and meticulous in examining the qualifications of one who would be the high priest. Now they are being asked to accept Jesus as High

was coming back from the battle in which he killed the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. ²Abraham gave him one tenth of all he had taken. (The first meaning of Melchizedek's name is "King of Righteousness." And because he was king of Salem, his name also means "King of Peace.") ³There is no record of Melchizedek's father or mother, or of any of his ancestors; no record of his birth or of his death. He is like the Son of God; he remains a priest forever.

⁴You see, then, how great he was. Abraham, the patriarch, gave him one tenth of all he got in the battle. ⁵And those descendants of Levi who are priests are commanded by the Law to collect one tenth from the people of Israel—that is, they collect it from their own countrymen, even though they too are descendants of Abra-

met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem," means "king of peace." Without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. 2

Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, their brothers—even though their brothers are descended from Abra- 3 4 5

Priest. But, he comes from the wrong Tribe! He could not be a Jewish high priest. But, the scripture speaks of another priestly order, which formed no part of the Jewish priesthood. Jesus is a high priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek. **King of Salem.** Time has proved Josephus correct in saying Salem is Jerusalem. In the Armana tablets, *Urusalim* is the ancient name of this city. Melchizedek was greater than Aaron, because he was king as well as high priest. **And a priest.** The Jews accepted the fact that Melchizedek was a true priest of the Most High God, even though he was not part of the Aaronic priesthood. **As Abraham.** See *Gen. 14:18-20*. Note that Melchizedek blessed Abraham. This fact has special meaning to a Jew.

2. **Abraham gave him.** This fact shows that Abraham accepted Melchizedek as being genuine, the true Priest of the Most High God. **King of Righteousness.** In ancient time, names had special meaning. *Abram's* name was changed to *Abraham* to show that he would be the FATHER of many nations. Melchizedek means King of Righteousness = *one who especially loves righteousness*. King of Salem = King of Peace = *one who especially loves peace*.

3. **There is no record.** The TEV accurately translates the *Hebrew idiom*. A *first century* reader understood it as it is worded in the TEV. The meaning is that Melchizedek's priesthood does not derive from these things which were so important to the Aaronic priesthood. To be a Jewish high priest, there had to be a precise record of mother and father, of ancestors, of birth, and this priesthood was limited to a certain definite period of time. Melchizedek stands *discrete* on the pages of history, appearing only for a brief instant! **He is like the Son of God.** Not *equal*, but *like!* The way in which he is like the Son of God has to do with the fact of his priesthood. It does not terminate! Aaron's priesthood terminated at his death, and his son replaced him as high priest. But Melchizedek's priesthood never came to an end, and even though he is no longer on the earth, he is still a priest of the Most High God. But the real point here is that Jesus is *that kind* of a High Priest.

4. **How great he was.** "I show you how great Melchizedek was, because the patriarch Abraham gave him one tenth (a tithe) of all he got in the battle. By doing this, Abraham showed that he believed Melchizedek greater than himself.

5. **And those descendants of Levi.** All the Jewish priests were descendants of Levi. The high priests were descendants of Aaron (who belonged to the Tribe of Levi). The Law commands them to collect one tenth (a tithe) from their fellow countrymen (the other Tribes). **Even though.** Since they are all descended from Abraham, none is greater than the other.

ham. ⁶Melchizedek was not descended from Levi, but he collected one tenth from Abraham and blessed him who received God's promises. ⁷There is no doubt that the one who blesses is greater than the one who is blessed. ⁸In the case of the priests, the tenth is collected by men who die; but as for Melchizedek, the tenth was collected by one who lives, as the scripture says. ⁹And, so to speak, when Abraham paid the tenth, Levi (whose descendants collect the tenth) also paid it. ¹⁰For Levi had not yet been born, but was, so to speak, in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek met him.

¹¹It was on the basis of the Levitical priesthood that the Law was given to the people of Israel. Now, if the work of the Levitical priests had been perfect, there would have been no need for a different kind of priest to appear, one who is in the priestly order of Melchizedek, not in

ham. This man, however, 6
did not trace his descent 7
from Levi, yet he collected a 8
tenth from Abraham and 9
blessed him who had the 10
promises. And without 11
doubt the lesser person is 12
blessed by the greater. In the 13
one case, the tenth is col- 14
lected by men who die; but 15
in the other case, by him 16
who is declared to be living. 17
One might even say that 18
Levi, who collects the tenth, 19
paid the tenth through Abra- 20
ham, because when Mel- 21
chizedek met Abraham, Levi 22
was still in the body of his 23
ancestor.

Jesus like Melchizedek

If perfection could have 11
been attained through the 12
Levitical priesthood (for on 13
the basis of it the law was 14
given to the people), why was 15
there still need for another 16
priest to come—one like 17
Melchizedek, not like Aar- 18

6. **Was not descended from.** Melchizedek was not a relative of either Levi or Abraham. In other words, the Law did not apply to what he did in receiving the tenth. **But he collected.** The fact that he could do this, separate and apart from the Law, proved him greater than Abraham. **And blessed him.** Abraham was the one who received God's promises!!! For Melchizedek to bless him, also proves his greatness, as *verse 7* shows.

7. **There is no doubt.** "This proves that Melchizedek is higher in rank and closer to God, than Abraham." [Man blesses God in the sense of praising Him, or wishing that all praise may be His.]

8. **By men who die.** "The priesthood of all Jewish priests terminates at a point in time, and the death of the high priest is a matter of record, because accurate accounts are kept of it." **By one who lives.** The fact that the scripture says nothing of Melchizedek's death is made to be a proof. We see him in the scripture *only* as a living priest (in contrast to the Jewish priests), and in this sense he is a *type* (symbolic picture) of Jesus the Son of God. Compare *Psalms 110:4*.

9. **And, so to speak.** "In fact, even Levi himself paid the tenth to Melchizedek, so to speak. This is further proof that Melchizedek is a greater priest than any priest of the Levitical priesthood." [The Jewish priesthood = the Aaronic priesthood = the Levitical priesthood.]

10. **Had not yet been born.** "All the Nation of Israel, including kings and priests, were represented in Abraham even though they were not yet born. So the **FACT** that Abraham paid the tenth to Melchizedek is *imputed* to Levi and all his descendants as well."

11. **It was on the basis.** The Law was given so that the people could worship God under the Levitical priesthood. The priesthood made it possible for the Law to function. No wonder, then, that many Jews would look no farther than the Law and think that *it* was God's *perfect* salvation. **Now.** "If the Levitical priesthood and the Law had been perfect, it would have continued on forever. But the prediction of a different kind of priest is evidence of God's *intent* to change both the priesthood and the Law."

Aaron's order. ¹²For when the priesthood is changed, there also has to be a change of the law. ¹³And our Lord, of whom these things are said, belonged to a different tribe; and no member of his tribe ever served as a priest at the altar. ¹⁴It is well known that he was born a member of the tribe of Judah; and Moses did not mention this tribe when he spoke of priests.

Another Priest, like Melchizedek

¹⁵The matter becomes even plainer; a different priest has appeared, who is like Melchizedek. ¹⁶He was not made a priest by human rules and regulations; he became a priest through the power of a life which has no end. ¹⁷For the scripture says, "You will be a priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸The old rule, then, is set aside, because it was weak and useless. ¹⁹For the Law of Moses could not make anything perfect. And now a better hope has been brought in, through which we come near to God.

on? For when there is a 12
change of the priesthood,
there must also be a change
of the law. He of whom these 13
things are said belonged to a
different tribe, and no one
from that tribe has ever
served at the altar. For it is 14
clear that our Lord descend-
ed from Judah, and in regard
to that tribe Moses said
nothing about priests. And 15
what we have said is even
more clear if another priest
like Melchizedek appears,
one who has become a priest 16
not on the basis of a regula-
tion as to his ancestry but on
the basis of the power of an
indestructible life. For it is 17
declared:

"You are a priest forever,
just like Melchizedek."

The former regulation is 18
set aside because it was weak
and useless (for the law made 19
nothing perfect), and a bet-
ter hope is introduced, by
which we draw near to God.

12. **For when.** "Since the Law was given on the basis of the Levitical priesthood, when that changes, the Law must also change. This is proof, then, that the Law of Moses has been superseded."

13. **And our Lord.** "Now, it is clear that God intended to transfer the priesthood away from the Tribe of Levi, because He said of our Lord Jesus: 'You will be a priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek' (see *Heb. 5:6*). Our Lord belonged to a different tribe, and no member of that tribe (Judah) could ever serve as a priest under the Law. Only members of the Tribe of Levi could serve under the Law."

14. **It is well known.** "Every Jew knows that the Messiah was to come from the Tribe of Judah, and that our Lord came from that tribe. But Moses did not authorize priests to come from this tribe!"

15. **A different priest has appeared.** "God's vow makes this matter even plainer! Our Lord Jesus was made High Priest by God's vow (*verse 21*)!" Like Melchizedek, Jesus is both High Priest and King! This is proof of *verse 12*.

16. **He was not.** "Jesus our Lord did not become a high priest through human rules and regulations. He became a high priest through the power of his endless life, which makes it possible for him to serve forever!!! This is in contrast with the Levitical priesthood, who die and terminate their service."

17. **For the scripture says.** *Psalms 110:4*. "Like Melchizedek, he will continue to be both priest and king. His service will not terminate, as long as his people have any need of either priest or king!"

18. **Is set aside.** "The old rule of the Law of Moses is totally superseded! It was weak and useless, because it could neither reform nor forgive sinners." [The forgiveness of sins under the Law was based upon what Jesus would do (*Heb. 9:15*). The Law did what God wanted it to do, but it was not *final*."]

19. **Could not make anything perfect.** The Law was only temporary! By itself, it could not prepare men and women for eternal life! "*For the blood of bulls and goats can never take sins away*" (*Heb. 10:4*). **And now a better hope.** "The better priesthood of Christ is the basis of a better hope, through which we can come near to God and call him *our Father!*"

²⁰In addition, there is also God's vow. There was no such vow when the others were made priests. ²¹But Jesus became a priest by means of a vow, when God said to him,

"The Lord has made a vow,
and will not change his mind:
'You will be a priest forever.' "

²²This difference, then, makes Jesus the guarantee also of a better covenant.

²³There is another difference: those other priests were many because they died and could not continue their work. ²⁴But Jesus lives on forever, and his work as priest does not pass on to someone else. ²⁵And so he is able, now and always, to save those who come to God through him, because he lives forever to plead with God for them.

²⁶Jesus, then, is the High Priest that meets our needs. He is holy; he has no fault or sin in him; he has been set apart from sinful men and raised

And it was not without 20
an oath! Others became
priests without any oath, but 21
he became a priest with an
oath when God said to him:

"The Lord has sworn
and will not change his
mind,
'You are a priest
forever.' "

Because of this oath, Jesus 22
has become the guarantee of
a better covenant.

Now there were many of 23
those priests, since death
prevented them from contin-
uing in office; but because 24
Jesus lives forever, he has a
permanent priesthood. 25
Therefore he is able to save
completely those who come
to God through him, because
he always lives to intercede
for them.

Such a high priest meets 26
our need—one who is holy,
blameless, pure, set apart
from sinners, exalted above

20. **There is also God's vow.** "In addition to the *better hope*, God's vow that made Jesus our High Priest is also proof that the Good News is superior to the Law of Moses." God's vow affirms that he will not change his promise!!! Compare *Gen. 22:16-18; Deut. 1:34-35; 4:21; Psalm 89:4; 110:4*.

21. **By means of a vow.** "This means that an unchangeable priesthood has been conferred on Jesus our Lord!" The quotation is *Psalm 110:4*.

22. **This difference, then.** "God's vow, mentioned in *verse 21*, is the difference by which Jesus becomes the *guarantee* of this better covenant!"

23. **There is another difference.** "Still another reason why Jesus is superior to the Levitical priesthood: there had to be many of them, because death would not allow them to continue to serve." There were at least 83 Jewish high priests during the time from Aaron to Phineas (about 1727 years).

24. **But Jesus.** "Christ conquered death before he became High Priest! He came out of the tomb in his body (*Matt. 28:9*) and lives on forever in his body (*Luke 24:50-53* and notes)." **Does not pass on.** "No one will need to take his place, because death cannot terminate his service!"

25. **And so he is able.** I have followed *MacKnight* in viewing this through *Jewish eyes*. "Christ offered his crucified body as a sacrifice in heaven (*Heb. 8:2-3*), and as he is continually there in his crucified body, this one and the same sacrifice is always present before God! This continually declares God's act in Christ, and Christ himself continually pleads with God for us on that basis (compare *Rom. 8:34*). The Jewish high priest sprinkling blood on the *MILASTERION* (mercy seat) on top of the *box of the covenant* on the Day of Atonement (each year) was symbolic of what Jesus would do. Blood, as the symbol of death, opened the *earthly place for worship* until the next Day of Atonement (the following year). Christ's blood = death = the one sacrifice which never needs to be repeated!!! Compare *Heb. 9:11-14*."

26. **Jesus, then.** He meets our needs, but the Jewish priests could not meet our needs! **No fault or sin.** The Jewish priests did have faults and sins. **He has been set apart.** The Jewish high priest had to be set apart and ritually purified during the seven days before the Day of Atonement (see *Lev. 16:1-28*). Christ is greater, because he has been raised above the heavens!!!

above the heavens. ²⁷He is not like other high priests; he does not need to offer sacrifices every day, for his own sins first, and then for the sins of the people. He offered one sacrifice, once and for all, when he offered himself. ²⁸The Law of Moses appoints men who are imperfect to be high priests; but God's promise with the vow, which came later than the Law, appoints the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

the heavens. Unlike the other ²⁷ high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law ²⁸ appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Jesus Our High Priest

8 Here is the whole point of what we are saying: we have such a high priest as this, who sits at the right of the throne of the Divine Majesty in heaven. ²He serves as high priest in the Most Holy Place, that is, in the real tent which was put up by the Lord, not by man.

The High Priest of a New Covenant

8 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. ²

³Every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and animal sacrifices to God; and so our high priest must also have something to offer. ⁴If he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer the gifts accord-

Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. ³ ⁴

27. **He is not like.** He had no need to first offer a sacrifice for himself, because he had no sins (*Heb. 4:15*). **Once and for all.** (1) He did not need to offer a sacrifice for himself. (2) He did not need to offer a sacrifice each year, but only once! (3) The sacrifice which he offered, was not bulls and goats, but HIMSELF!

28. **The Law of Moses.** "The descendants of Aaron, whom the Law appointed high priests, were imperfect and had to offer sacrifices for their own sins." **But God's promise with the vow.** "This is how much better the Son is, who is our High Priest! He is sinless! He lives forever! He is perfect!"

1. **Here is the whole point.** "This is the climax!" **We have such a high priest.** "The High Priest we have been describing, who is without fault, sinless, set apart, and raised above the heavens; this is our High Priest - Jesus Christ!" **Who sits at the right.** His greatness is shown by the fact that he sits at the right side of God in heaven. Compare *Eph. 1:20-21; Heb. 10:12*.

2. **He serves.** Compare *Heb. 1:13* and note: The fact that Christ sits at the right side of the throne shows that he has become the one who serves as high priest of heaven. **In the real tent.** [Tabernacle is an old word which means tent.] The man-made tent is described in *Heb. 9:2-3*. The Most Holy Place [sanctuary] in the real tent is heaven itself (*Heb. 9:11*).

3. **Is appointed.** "Our Lord sitting down at the right side of God in the real tent is proof that he offered an acceptable sacrifice for sin. The very purpose for which a high priest is appointed shows this. As our High Priest, Christ must have something to offer in heaven, which is the only place where he could serve."

4. **If he were on earth.** Jesus could not possibly offer sacrifices in the earthly temple at Jerusalem [which was standing at the time this was written]. He came from the wrong tribe (*Heb. 7:13-14*), and there were already priests who were serving in the earthly temple.

ing to the Jewish Law. ⁵The work they do as priests is really only a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven. It is the same as it was with Moses. When he was about to put up the tent, God told him, "Be sure to make everything like the pattern you were shown on the mountain." ⁶But, as it is, Jesus has been given priestly work which is much greater than theirs, just as the covenant which he arranged between God and men is a better one, because it is based on promises of better things.

⁷If there had been nothing wrong with the first covenant, there would have been no need for a second one. ⁸But God finds fault with his people when he says,

"The days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will draw up a new covenant
with the people of Israel,
and with the tribe of Judah.

They serve at a sanctuary ⁵
that is a copy and shadow of
what is in heaven. This is
why Moses was warned when
he was about to build the
tabernacle: "See to it that
you make everything accord-
ing to the pattern shown you
on the mountain." ⁶ But the
ministry Jesus has received is
as superior to theirs as the
covenant of which he is me-
diator is superior to the old
one, and it is founded on bet-
ter promises.

For if there had been ⁷
nothing wrong with that first
covenant, no place would
have been sought for an-
other. But God found fault ⁸
with the people and said:

"The time is coming, says
the Lord,
when I will make a new
covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of
Judah.

5. **Only a copy and a shadow.** "Still further proof is that the work which the priests of the Jewish Law do, imitates the true service in heaven. That is, it makes us know there is true service in heaven, even though the things that priests of the Law do are not that *true service*." **Like the pattern.** God's strict instruction to Moses is used here as proof that the priests served in the earthly tent in imitation of the heavenly things. *MacKnight* thinks that God explained to Moses that exactness was necessary in constructing the earthly tent for worship and the things that were to be done there, because they were to be a copy and shadow of the *true tent* and *true service* in heaven.

6. **Jesus has been given.** The Jews thought the earthly service of their priests was perfect. But Christ has been given work which is much greater than theirs!! **Just as.** The Jews were proud of the covenant between themselves and God. But the covenant which Jesus arranged between God and men is much better, with much better promises. Compare *1 Cor. 2:7-10; Rom. 8:1-4* and notes.

7. **If there had been.** "If the first covenant given on Sinai had been faultless, and sinners could have been put right with God and forgiven by it, a second covenant would never have been introduced!" See *Heb. 7:18-19*.

8. **But God finds fault with his people.** "This is proved by the prophet Jeremiah, through whom God spoke about a new covenant." *Jer. 31:31-34*. The Law ritually purified people, but did not purify their conscience (see *Heb. 10:2*). A new covenant had to come, because: (1) the first covenant was weak and useless (*Heb. 7:18-19*); (2) Jeremiah had predicted a new covenant; (3) when Jeremiah spoke about a new covenant, this made the old covenant obsolete. **When I will draw up.** It was God who acted in Christ! With 20/20 hindsight, we see God's promise of the New Covenant in the words of *Gen. 3:15*. **Israel** = God's spiritual Israel among the Gentiles = every Gentile Christian. **Judah** = God's people among the Jews = every Jewish Christian.

⁹It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. They were not faithful to the covenant I made with them, and so I paid no attention to them, says the Lord.

¹⁰Now, this is the covenant that I will make with the people of Israel in the days to come, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹¹None of them will have to teach his fellow-citizen, or tell his fellow-countryman, 'Know the Lord.'

Because they will all know me, from the least to the greatest.

¹²I will have mercy on their transgressions, and will no longer remember their sins."

It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them,

says the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, says the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'

because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

I will forgive their wickedness, and will remember their sins no more."

9. **It will not be like.** The first covenant dealt with symbols and externals. The new covenant deals with realities and motivations. **They were not faithful.** When the Jews were not faithful to their end of the bargain, God turned his back on them and allowed them to be taken over by foreign powers. The new covenant is a *more permanent thing*, since it is based upon God's act in Christ!

10. **This is the covenant.** This New Covenant: (1) is inward or spiritual; (2) is individual, and therefore universal; (3) is kind and allows forgiveness. The Law is a curse (*James 2:10; Gal. 3:10*). Whatever forgiveness those who lived under the Law received, came because of God's act in Christ (see *Heb. 9:15*). **Minds . . . hearts.** This is in contrast to writing them on stone tablets. **Their God . . . my people.** Compare *Rev. 21:3* and note.

11. **Will have to teach.** By the old covenant, every Jewish baby was born into the covenant relationship and had to be instructed in his heritage. If they were not taught, they did not know God at all. But no one can be part of the new covenant without first knowing both the Father and the Son. The Book of Acts shows that all become part of this new covenant by faith in Christ, tiring from sin, and being buried with Christ in the liquid grave. **Because they will all know me.** *MacKnight* sees in this the prediction of *Isa. 11:9*. "Because the earth will be as full of awareness of the Eternal, as the water fills up the sea" (Zamenhof).

12. **I will have mercy.** When they become part of this New Covenant, all their sins will be canceled! Under the old covenant, the people remembered their sins (*Heb. 10:3*) and were never free of them. Christians continue to have their sins canceled, on the basis of *1 John 1:5-10*.

¹³By speaking of a new covenant, God has made the first one old; and anything that is getting old and worn-out will soon disappear.

By calling this covenant 13 "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

Earthly and Heavenly Worship

9 The first covenant had rules for worship and a man-made place for worship as well. ²A tent was put up, the outside one, which was called the Holy Place. In it were the lamp, the table, and the bread offered to God. ³Behind the second curtain was the tent called the Most Holy Place. ⁴In it were the gold altar for the burning of incense, and the box of the covenant, all covered with gold. The box contained the gold jar with the manna in it, Aaron's rod that had sprouted leaves, and the two stone tablets with

Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle

9 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up; in its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread. This was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered chest of the covenant. This chest contained the golden jar of manna, Aaron's rod that had budded, and the stone tablets of

13. **God has made the first one old.** "By promising a new covenant, God made the first covenant obsolete and showed that the whole Age of Moses would be terminated and superseded. In actual fact, the Age of Moses terminated at the Cross (see *Col. 2:14* and note). But the Jewish priests continued their service in the temple until Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. See notes on *Matt. 24:29-31*.

1. **The first covenant.** To show that it was both right and proper that the Law of Moses and the Jewish priesthood were terminated and superseded, a contrast is made between the worship of the old and new covenants. The rules for worship were a copy or imitation of Christ's work in heaven. The man-made place for worship was a shadow or silhouette of the true place for worship. Nothing in the Jewish worship was haphazard or meaningless. God had carefully patterned this to prefigure or show beforehand, the true worship of the Good News. Compare *Heb. 8:5* and note.

2. **A tent.** The original setting up of the tent and the beginning of the Jewish worship which was to continue some 1,700 years (*Exod. 40*) is used for this contrast (rather than the temple worship). **The outside one.** The Holy Place, where the priests served daily. **The lamp.** This lamp had seven arms or branches which had cups for holding oil at their ends. Wicks were floated in the oil, and lighted. Here there is one lamp with seven lamps. In *Rev. 1:12* there are seven lamp-stands. **The table,** on which were kept twelve loaves of bread offered to God, each loaf of which contained two-fifths of a bushel of flour. See *Exod. 24:3-5*.

3. **Behind the second curtain.** The Holy Place was separated from the Most Holy Place by this second curtain. Compare *Heb. 10:20*. Both of these were built and furnished exactly like the pattern which God showed to Moses. No one was permitted to enter the Most Holy Place, except the High Priest, and then only on the Day of Atonement.

4. **The gold altar.** Much time has been spent trying to understand why this altar is mentioned as being in the Most Holy Place. Perhaps there were two??? Certainly the Jews to whom this Letter was written understood. **Incense.** See *Rev. 8:3-4* and notes. **The box of the covenant.** [Ark is an old word meaning box.] See *Exod. 25:10-22*. **The gold jar.** *Exod. 16:32-34*. **Aaron's rod.** *Num. 17:1-11*. **The two stone tablets.** *Deut. 10:1-5*. Only the two stone tablets seemed to still be in the box of the covenant when Solomon's temple was dedicated (*1 Kings 8:9*). The box of the covenant disappeared when Solomon's temple was destroyed (*2 Kings 25:9*).

the commandments written on them. ⁵Above the box were the glorious creatures representing the Divine Presence, with their wings spread over the place where sins were forgiven. But now is not the time to explain everything in detail.

⁶This is how those things were arranged. The priests go into the outside tent every day to perform their duties; ⁷but only the High Priest goes into the inside tent, and he does so only once a year. He takes blood with him which he offers to God on behalf of himself and for the sins which the people have committed without knowing they were sinning. ⁸The Holy Spirit clearly teaches from all these arrangements that the way into the Most Holy Place has not yet been opened as long as the outside tent still stands. ⁹This is a figure which refers to the present time. It means that the gifts and animal sacrifices offered to God cannot make the worshiper's heart perfect.

the covenant. Above the chest were the cherubim of the Glory overshadowing the place of atonement. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

5. **Above the box.** A cover over the box of the covenant, called the HILASTERION (place where sins are forgiven), was made out of one solid piece of gold and included two winged figures as part of it, facing each other over the area where the blood was sprinkled each Day of Atonement.

6. **This is how.** There was constant activity in the outside tent. The ordinary priests came in and out as they burned incense at the morning and evening sacrifices, in keeping the lamp in working order, in replacing the bread offered to God (the bread of the Presence). All this was still being done in Jerusalem in the temple, as this Letter was being written.

7. **But only the High Priest.** He alone was permitted to enter the inside tent; only once each year (Day of Atonement); with blood. **He takes blood.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "On that day the High Priest was to enter the Holiest at least *thrice*, first with the incense, then with the blood of the bullock which atoned for his own sins and those of his house [family], and finally with the blood of the goat for the sins of the people." See *Lev. 16:11-34; Exod. 30:10-25*.

8. **The Holy Spirit clearly teaches.** The Spirit is the *author* of the ritual used in the tent, and of the teaching *inherent* in every part of the ritual, furniture, etc. Compare *1 Pet. 1:11-12*. **Has not yet been opened.** This limited access to the Most Holy Place in the tent, showed that worship and fellowship with God were not yet open to men. While the outside tent (symbolic of the ritual and worship that was the basis of The Law) still stood as part of God's pattern for worship, this showed that the very Presence of God was *out of reach* for mankind. This proves that the Law had to be superseded by something better!

9. **This is a figure.** To the Jewish mind, *the present time* meant the Age of Moses. See notes on *Heb. 2:5; 6:5*. This means that the arrangement with the outside tent blocking the way into the inside tent, was proof that the Mosaic worship could not produce union and fellowship with God. **Cannot make.** These things could not remove guilt from the conscience. See *Acts 13:38-39*.

¹⁰They have to do only with food, drink, and various cleansing ceremonies. These are all outward rules, which apply only until the time when God will reform all things.

¹¹But Christ has already come as the High Priest of the good things that are already here. The tent in which he serves is greater and more perfect; it is not made by men, that is, it is not a part of this created world. ¹²When Christ went through the tent and entered once and for all into the Most Holy Place, he did not take the blood of goats and calves to offer as sacrifice; rather, he took his own blood and obtained eternal salvation for us. ¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of the burnt calf are sprinkled on the people who are ritually unclean, and make them clean by taking away their ritual impurity. ¹⁴Since this is true, how much more is accomplished by the blood of Christ! Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself as a perfect

They are only a matter of 10 food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

The Blood of Christ

When Christ came as high 11 priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by 12 means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and 13 bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will 14 the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to

10. **They have to do only with.** The ritual worship which formed the basis of the Law was only concerned with outward rules. These things apply only until the time when the New Covenant is put into effect. Remember, these Jews still thought in terms of the Law. Compare *Col. 2:20-23* and notes. **When God will reform** = time of the new order = the Age of Christ, which began at the Cross. See notes on *Matt. 19:28; Heb. 2:5; 6:5*.

11. **But Christ has already come.** "The time when God will reform all things is here already! Christ has already come! He is the High Priest of the good things (which the Law could not supply) that are already here!" This is the climax. The *historical Christ* is the whole turning point in God's Plan! **The tent in which he serves.** See *verse 24*. It is not a copy, but the real thing!!!

12. **When Christ.** The Aaronic high priest went through the outside tent into the Most Holy Place, taking the blood of goats and calves, and made atonement for one more year. Jesus went into the Most Holy Place once and for all, with his own blood, and eternal salvation is the result! He does not need to offer himself a second time!

13. **The blood.** This is the way people were made clean by the Aaronic priesthood. Continual sacrifices were offered to God by his direction in the Law. These came to a climax in the Day of Atonement. Blood, symbolic of both death and life (*Lev. 17:11*), was very important in the ritual of the Law (*verse 22*).

14. **By the blood of Christ!** "If the blood of animals takes away ritual impurity, how much more will be accomplished by the blood of God's Son!!!" **Through the eternal Spirit.** *MacKnight* says: "Christ is said to have offered himself *through* the eternal Spirit, because he was raised from the dead by the

sacrifice to God. His blood will make our consciences clean from useless works, so that we may serve the living God.

¹⁵For this reason Christ is the one who arranges a new covenant, so that those who have been called by God may receive the eternal blessings that God has promised. This can be done because there has been a death which sets men free from the wrongs they did while they were under the first covenant.

¹⁶Where there is a will, it has to be proved that the man who made it has died. ¹⁷For a will means nothing while the man who made it is alive; it goes into effect only after his death. ¹⁸That is why even the first covenant was made good only with the use of blood. ¹⁹First, Moses told the people all the commandments, as set forth in the Law. Then he took the blood of calves, together with water, and sprinkled both the book of the Law and all the people with hyssop and scarlet

God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

For this reason Christ is 15 the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

In the case of a will, it is 16 necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first 18 covenant was not put into effect without blood. When 19 Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all

Spirit, *1 Pet. 3:18*; consequently he was enabled by the Spirit to offer himself to God; that is, to present his crucified body before the throne of God in heaven." See note on *Heb. 7:25*. **Our consciences clean.** "Those under the Law could not lose their sense of guilt and their fear of punishment. But the blood of Christ will take away guilt and fear, so that we may be free to serve the living God!"

15. For this reason. "Because the blood of Christ is so much greater than the blood of animals." **Christ is the one.** "He is the High Priest who *hands out* the blessings of the New Covenant; and the sacrifice who makes the New Covenant possible by his bloody death!" See *Heb. 8:6-8* and notes. **May receive.** Does this mean that Abraham, Isaac, etc., were still under the sentence of "sin and death" until God acted in Christ??? No, but their forgiveness was based upon what Christ would do. God's mercy, all the way from extending the life of guilty Adam, to the end of time itself, is based upon the ONE ACT in Christ!!! **A death which sets men free.** "All the animals who died on Jewish altars could not set men free. The death of God's Son does set men free!!!" Compare *Heb. 11:39-40*.

16. Where there is a will. The same Greek word means both covenant and will. Now the explanation shifts to the *probation of a will*. "To show why Christ had to die to make the New Covenant possible, I remind you that a will does not go into effect until the man who made it dies."

17. For a will means nothing. "During a man's lifetime, he may do as he pleases with his will, because it is not valid. His death is necessary for it to go into effect, just as an animal must die on the altar to become a sacrifice to God."

18. Was made good only. "From the beginning, God made good his covenant by the death of a sacrifice. Blood, of course, is a symbol of death."

19. First, Moses. This explains how the first covenant was made good with blood. Moses read the commandments (*Exod. 24:3-8*), and used scarlet wool tied on branches of hyssop to sprinkle the mixture of blood and water on the book of the Law and all the people.

wool. ²⁰He said, "This is the blood which seals the covenant that God has commanded you to obey." ²¹In the same way, Moses also sprinkled the blood on the tent and over all the things used in worship. ²²Indeed, according to the Law, almost everything is made clean by blood; and sins are forgiven only if blood is poured out.

Christ's Sacrifice Takes Away Sins

²³These things, which are copies of the heavenly originals, had to be made clean in this way. But the heavenly things themselves require much better sacrifices. ²⁴For Christ did not go into a holy place made by men, a copy of the real one. He went into heaven itself, where he now appears on our behalf in the presence of God. ²⁵The Jewish High Priest goes into the Holy Place every year with the blood of an animal. But Christ did not go in to offer himself many times; ²⁶for then he would have had to suffer many times ever since the creation of the world. Instead, he has now appeared once and for all, when all ages of

the people. He said, "This is ²⁰ the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same ²¹ way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law ²² requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

It was necessary, then, for ²³ the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not ²⁴ enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did ²⁵ he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would ²⁶ have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the

20. **This is the blood.** The blood ratified the covenant. Note that this covenant contained the Ten Commandments, and was the old covenant which was superseded by the New Covenant of Christ. [The tent for worship was not completed until about a year later.]

21. **In the same way.** These things also were *ratified* and dedicated to God by the use of blood.

22. **Almost everything.** A few things were made clean by water, a few by fire, and a few with the ashes of the burnt calf (red heifer). But in general, it was blood which was used. **And sins are forgiven.** Jews understood this. The animal dying on the altar represented forgiveness which was imputed to the one for whom the sacrifice was offered.

23. **These things.** The tent, all the things used in worship, and all the priests themselves. **But the heavenly things.** Animal sacrifices are not good enough to make clean the heavenly things. This means that God would not admit sinners into the heavenly world by anything less than the blood of his Son!!!

24. **For Christ.** Christ did not offer his crucified body in the holy place of human construction. **He went into heaven itself.** There in the presence of God himself, Jesus pleads for us! The High Priest does this in the earthly tent, but only in imitation of what Jesus alone can do in heaven.

25. **The Jewish High Priest.** He must go in each year with the blood of an animal. **But Christ.** Though it was necessary for Christ to open heaven to us by the sacrifice of himself, he did not need to offer himself many times.

26. **For then.** He would have had to die many times since the beginning of creation. **Instead.** Rather than dying many times, he appeared once and for all! There is no need to go back to the *many sacrifices* of the Law!!! What Jesus did is complete and has no need to be repeated again and again!!! **When all**

time are nearing the end, to remove sin through the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷Everyone must die once, and after that be judged by God. ²⁸In the same manner, Christ also was offered in sacrifice once to take away the sins of many. He will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are waiting for him.

10 The Jewish Law is not a full and faithful model of the real things. It is only a faint outline of the good things to come. The same sacrifices are offered forever, year after year. How can the Law, then, by means of these sacrifices, make perfect the people who come to God? ²If the people worshiping God had been made really clean from their sins, they would not feel guilty of sin any more, and all sacrifices would stop. ³As it is, however, the sacrifices serve to

end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

10 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual

ages of time. This means that Christ's sacrifice is independent of time and valid as a single act!!! If there was to be ONE sacrifice for all ages of time, then the ages *end*-at that event. This is the *completion* of God's Plan to put men right with himself.

27. Everyone must die once. Man dies only once, and the next thing for him is the judgment. [This makes the idea of reincarnation impossible.] Christ dies only once, and the next thing for him is the Second Coming.

28. Once to take away. He died only ONCE to *buy men for God* (Rev. 5:9). **But to save those.** See Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:8.

1. The Jewish Law. The Jewish Law was a thing of pride, even to the point of fanaticism. Compare Acts 21:20-28 and notes. **Is not.** The Law did not display the *coming realities* in a form that people could understand. The earthly tent and the priests who served in it were not the *reality* of God's blessing for man. **It is only a faint outline.** The greatness of the Law was only a faint outline of the **REALITY** which is Christ. Compare 1 John 5:20. **The same sacrifices.** This is implied in the previous chapter. "If these same sacrifices must be offered over and over again, they are useless! If they had the ability to make people perfect, there would be no need to offer them more than one time!"

2. Had been made really clean. "The fact that they continued to feel both guilt and fear of punishment shows they were not really made clean from their sins. When guilt and fear are removed by the sacrifice, it has no need to be repeated."

3. The sacrifices serve to remind people. "The sacrifices of the Law on the Day of Atonement and the ritual with the scapegoat only serve to remind people of their sin and guilt, and increase their fear of punishment." [Some Christian groups are guilty of doing this also.]

remind people of their sins, year after year. ⁴For the blood of bulls and goats can never take sins away.

⁵For this reason, when Christ was about to come into the world, he said to God:

"You do not want sacrifices and offerings, but you have prepared a body for me.

⁶You are not pleased with animals burned whole on the altar.

or with sacrifices to take away sins.

⁷Then I said, 'Here I am, God, to do what you want me to, just as it is written of me in the book of the Law.' "

⁸First he said, "You neither want nor are you pleased with sacrifices and offerings, or with animals burned on the altar and the sacrifices to take away sins." He said this even though all these sacrifices are offered according to the Law.

⁹Then he said, "Here I am, God, to do what you want me to do." So God does away with all the old sacrifices and puts the sacrifice of Christ in

reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 4

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: 5

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;

with burnt offerings and sin offerings 6

you were not pleased.

Then I said, 'Here I am— it is written about me in the scroll— 7

I have come to do your will, O God.' "

First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, "Here 9

I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first

4. **Can never take sins away.** The animals killed on Jewish altars had a moral effect on the people, and pointed forward to the Messiah, but had no real effect on sins. Micah taught the same thing, and implied this was why the pagans used human sacrifices. "*Will the Lord be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep, or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my firstborn child to pay for my sins?*" (Micah 6:7).

5. **For this reason.** To show that the sacrifices of the Law were useless, and could not take sins away. **He said to God.** The quotation is from *Psalms 40:6-8* Septuagint. This was a prophecy of how Christ would view the ritual of the Law and his own mission. The point is that the *Son's offering of himself* is the true sacrifice, which as prophecy shows, God wanted to be made. **You do not want** the sacrifices and offerings of the Law, because they are weak and useless. **But you have prepared.** As the Eternal Logos, Christ did not have a body. **But** the prophecy is that he would come in human form. See *1 John 4:1-3*. Jesus had to take our *flesh and blood* to be able to destroy the Devil (*Heb. 2:14-15* and notes) by dying on the Cross.

6. **You are not pleased.** These were intended to be temporary. In time the people became superstitious toward them.

7. **Then I said.** The Psalmist shows Christ as a volunteer who comes of his own free will to do what God wants him to do! Compare *John 10:17-18*. **Just as it is written.** The Old Testament itself was full of prophecies about the coming Messiah who would die as *The Sin Offering* for all time!!! See *John 5:39*.

8. **First he said.** "The Only Son, who came into the world to disclose The Father to mankind (*John 1:18; Heb. 1:2*), said that God was not pleased with the ritual worship of the Law." **Even though.** "Yes, God did command them to be offered. **But** they were all to be terminated and superseded when the Messiah came into the world and offered himself as *the true sacrifice*."

9. **Then he said.** "He volunteered to do this mission for God." **So God does away.** "God himself terminates the old sacrifices of the first covenant! God himself puts the sacrifice of Christ in their place! It is God himself who supersedes the old covenant by the new covenant!"

their place. ¹⁰Because Jesus Christ did what God wanted him to do, we are all made clean from sin by the offering that he made of his own body, once and for all.

¹¹Every Jewish priest stands and performs his services every day and offers the same sacrifices many times. But these sacrifices can never take away sins. ¹²Christ, however, offered one sacrifice for sins, and offering that is good forever, and then sat down at the right side of God. ¹³There he now waits until God puts his enemies as a footstool under his feet. ¹⁴With one sacrifice, then, he has made perfect forever those who are clean from sin.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also gives us his witness. First he says,

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them in the days to come, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and write them on their minds.”

to establish the second, And ¹⁰ by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Day after day every priest ¹¹ stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time ¹² one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time he waits ¹³ for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect ¹⁴ forever those who are being made holy.

The Holy Spirit also testi- ¹⁵ fies to us about this. First he says:

“This is the covenant I ¹⁶ will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”

10. **Because.** What God wanted, that the sacrifices of the Law could not do, was to make men clean from their sin. Notice that the sacrifices were not to *appease an angry God*, but to *change estranged children*! Because Jesus did what God wanted him to do (fulfill the will of God), we (who are Christians) are all made clean from sin. **By the offering.** Some Jews had said that Christianity had no offerings for sin, but that the Law did. Jesus Christ made the offering of his own crucified body in heaven itself. This is so perfect and complete that it had only to be done ONCE!!! We who are made clean from sin by *Christ on the cross* (1 Cor. 1:23 and notes) are made friends of God (2 Cor. 5:18-19) who are able to worship Him here and now, and enter the Eternal World later.

11. **Every Jewish priest.** “You can plainly see the futility of the sacrifices of the Law!”

12. **Christ, however.** “Notice the contrast!” **Offered one sacrifice.** “Not many times!” **That is good forever.** “What Christ DID will never be terminated or superseded!” **And then sat down.** “The Jewish priest stands and performs his service every day. Christ offered one sacrifice and sat down. The *completeness* of Christ’s ONE SACRIFICE is proved by the fact that he did sit down and now sits at God’s right side.”

13. **There he now waits.** “Until God destroys his enemies!” See *Heb. 1:13* and note. This means: “Christ must rule the universe until God crushes all his enemies!” Compare *Jude 14-15*; *1 Cor. 15:25*.

14. **With one sacrifice.** “This one act of God in Christ is the perfect antidote to the guilt of sin and the fear of punishment. It is available to everyone who will reach out through faith to seize it and make themselves part of it!!! He has made perfect forever those who are clean from sin because they participated in His sacrifice (*Rom. 6:3-11* and notes).”

15. **And the Holy Spirit.** “The claim just made (*verse 14*) is verified by the Holy Spirit himself.”

16. **This is the covenant.** See *Heb. 8:10-12* and notes.

¹⁷And then he says, "I will not remember their sins and wicked deeds any longer."¹⁸So when these have been forgiven, an offering to take away sins is no longer needed.

Let Us Come Near to God

¹⁹We have, then, brothers, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. ²⁰He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the curtain—that is, through his own body. ²¹We have a great priest in charge of the house of God. ²²Let us come near to God, then, with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been made clean from a guilty conscience, and bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise.

Then he adds:

"Their sins and lawless acts
I will remember no
more."

And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

A Call to Persevere

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

17. **And then he says.** This is the Holy Spirit speaking through Jeremiah. This means: "When sins are forgiven, no more sacrifices for sin are offered! When God forgives, he forgets!!! Every sin forgiven, is canceled, and no longer exists!!!"

18. **Is no longer needed.** "This is why Christianity does not have the continuing sacrifices which the Law had. When sin is canceled and God forgets it, no more sacrifice is necessary!!!" [But notice *Acts 8:20-24* and notes.]

19. **We have, then.** "As our High Priest, Christ has opened the way for Christians to go into the Most Holy Place, by the sacrifice of his crucified body."

20. **Through the curtain.** "Only the Jewish High Priest could go through the curtain into the Most Holy Place in the inside tent. Christ has opened for both Jews and Gentiles a new way, a living-way through the curtain which is his own body. For us, the *torn curtain (Matt. 27:51)* which admits us to the true Most Holy Place, is the human body of Christ!"

21. **We have.** "Not only has our great priest opened the Most Holy Place to us; not only does he continue to serve as our High Priest in God's presence; but our great priest is also God's Son who serves over God's house!" [God's house = the true Temple and true Israel (*Heb. 3:6*).]

22. **Let us come near to God.** Contrast this with *Heb. 12:18-21*. "We have complete confidence that we can come near to God! We can worship the Pure and Undeified One, because through Christ we are made to become pure and undefiled!!!" **Sincere heart.** "Not with empty formalism and endless rites, but *in spirit and truth (John 4:23)* and note)." **Sure faith.** "Believing not only that *God is (Heb. 11:6)*, but that our Great Priest has opened for us a new way to reach Him!" **That have been made clean.** See *Heb. 9:13* and note. **Bodies washed with pure water.** The Jewish mind would connect this with Christian baptism. See notes on *Acts 19:3*. Compare *Exod. 29:4; 30:20; 40:30*.

23. **Let us hold on firmly.** *MacKnight* says: "And being washed in body with the clean water of baptism, whereby we professed our faith in Christ as our only High Priest, let us hold fast [firmly] the confession [profession] of our hope of salvation through his ministrations [services for us], unmoved by the threats of our persecutors; for faithful is he who hath promised us pardon through Christ."

²⁴Let us be concerned with one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. ²⁵Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another, all the more since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming near.

²⁶For there is no longer any sacrifice that will take away sins if we purposely go on sinning after the truth has been made known to us. ²⁷Instead, all that is left is to be afraid of what will happen: the Judgment and the fierce fire which will destroy those who oppose God! ²⁸Anyone who disobeys the Law of Moses is put to death, without any mercy, when judged guilty from the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹What, then, of the man who despises the Son of God? who treats as a cheap thing the blood of God's covenant which cleansed him from sin? who insults the Spirit of grace? Just think how much worse is

ful. And let us consider how ²⁴ we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting ²⁵ together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

If we deliberately keep on ²⁶ sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone ²⁸ who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much ²⁹ more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of

24. **With one another.** See *Heb. 3:13* and note. Christians are not to quarrel and fight with each other, but rather to motivate each other to show love and to do good!

25. **Let us not give up the habit.** It was not God's plan for individual Christians to exist in isolation, but for them to form *communities*. To fulfill the command of *verse 24*, Christians must meet together for worship and encouragement. Persecution may have seemed like a good excuse to quit meeting together. [The Greek does not use *SUNAGOGUE* (The Assembly), but *EPISUNAGOGEN HEAUTON* (a leading together of selves). This would include both formal and informal gatherings. Compare *Acts 2:44-47*.] **The Day of the Lord.** Since this is written to Jewish Christians, the Day is probably the destruction of Jerusalem. On that Day, the power of the unbelieving Jews was destroyed.

26. **For there is no longer.** "Giving up the habit of meeting together" in *verse 25* is not indifference or neglect, but a deliberate act. Some would renounce the New Covenant and try to go back to the sacrifices of the Law. But since Christ has offered the sacrifice of himself, **THERE IS NO OTHER SACRIFICE!!!**

27. **Instead.** "Since Christ is the only sacrifice for sin, if you leave him, all that is left for you is the Judgment and the fierce fire of destruction!"

28. **Anyone who disobeys.** "God's justice in refusing to forgive those who renounce the Good News should be clear to you. Those who rebelled against the Law of Moses were put to death without any mercy. The evidence of two or three witnesses was enough to convict them."

29. **Who despises the Son of God?** "You see how much harsher punishment will come on any who rebel against the Son of God and renounce the Good News!" **The blood of God's covenant.** See *Heb. 9:15-17; 13:20*. See note on *Heb. 6:6*. **Who insults the Spirit.** The Spirit of grace is the unique gift of the Christian System (see *John 7:37-39* and notes). This makes the Holy Spirit the exact opposite (direct antithesis) to the Law of Moses (see *Gal. 3:2*). One who renounced the Good News, must have then said the miraculous gifts came from the Devil (see *Matt. 12:31-32*). This would be an *eternal sin*, which they would not turn away from, and which God then could not forgive!

the punishment he will deserve! ³⁰For we know who said, "I will take revenge, I will repay"; and who also said, "The Lord will judge his people."

³¹It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

³²Remember how it was with you in the past. In those days, after God's light had shone on you, you suffered many things, yet were not defeated by the struggle. ³³You were at times publicly insulted and mistreated, and at other times you were ready to join those who were being treated in this way. ³⁴You shared the sufferings of prisoners, and when all your belongings were seized you endured your loss gladly, because you knew that you still had for yourselves something much better, which would last forever. ³⁵Do not lose your courage, then, because it brings with it a great reward. ³⁶You need to be patient, in order to do the will of God and receive what he promises. ³⁷For, as the scripture says,

"Just a little while longer,
and he who is coming will come;
he will not delay.

grace? For we know him who. ³⁰said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to ³¹fall into the hands of the living God.

Remember those earlier ³²days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly ³³exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You ³⁴sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

So do not throw away your ³⁵confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very ³⁷little while,

"He who is coming will come and will not be late.

30. **For we know who said.** Since God is the real source of the New Covenant, any who renounce it and despise it must expect Him to take vengeance on them. The quotations are from *Deut. 32:35-36*.

31. **It is a terrible thing.** Since God lives forever, he can punish forever!!! It is a terrible thing to insult the Son, the Spirit, and the Christians - and then fall into the hands of the God who revenges this!!! [The unbeliever is also insulting these things and in effect calling God a liar.]

32. **Remember.** The Letter suddenly turns from God's vengeance, to appeal to their good works in the past. Compare *Gal. 3:3*; *2 Cor. 7:15*. After they had converted to Christ, they had suffered many things, yet stood strong! [There were many persecutions in Judea, such as *Acts 8:1*; *12:1*.]

33. **You were at times.** "Sometimes it was you who were publicly insulted, and other times it was your friends. You felt so strongly about it that you were ready to be a martyr with them!"

34. **You shared.** This shows how strong their faith had been in the past! *MacKnight* thinks Paul was one of the prisoners they shared with, during his first imprisonment at Rome.

35. **Do not lose your courage, then.** "Don't act like cowards, who drop their weapons and run." Evidently these Jewish Christians were undergoing some special time of persecution.

36. **You need to be patient.** "Patience, but like the farmer who, as he waits, does the things necessary to make it all come out the way he wants." See *Rom. 5:3-5* and notes.

37. **For, as the scripture says.** The quotation is *Hab. 2:3-4*. "This persecution will not last long, because Christ will come (a spiritual coming, see notes on *Matt. 24:29-31*) to terminate the opposition of the Jewish leaders and destroy the Jewish state."

³⁸My righteous people, however, will believe and live;
but if any of them turns back, I will not be pleased with him."

³⁹We are not people who turn back and are lost. Instead, we have faith and are saved.

Faith

11 To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see. ²It was by their faith that the men of ancient times won God's approval.

³It is by faith that we understand that the universe was created by God's word, so that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen.

⁴It was faith that made Abel offer to God a better sacrifice than Cain's. Through his faith he won God's approval as a righteous man, because God himself approved his gifts. By means of his faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

But my righteous one 38
will live by faith.
And if he shrinks back,
I will not be pleased with
him."

But we are not of those who 39
shrink back and are de-
stroyed, but of those who be-
lieve and are saved.

By Faith

11 Now faith is being sure 1
of what we hope for
and certain of what we do
not see. This is what the
ancients were commended
for. 2

By faith we understand 3
that the universe was formed
at God's command, so that
what is seen was not made
out of what was visible.

By faith Abel offered God 4
a better sacrifice than Cain
did. By faith he was com-
mended as a righteous man,
when God spoke well of his
offerings. And by faith he
still speaks, even though he
is dead.

38. **Will believe and live.** See note on *Matt. 24:21*. No Christian Jews died in the siege of Jerusalem, because they believed and escaped before the Roman armies surrounded the city!

39. **We are not.** "We Jewish Christians are not going to turn back and be destroyed by God! We live by faith and are saved!!!"

11. **To have faith.** See note on *James 2:19* about the nature of faith. **To be sure.** Faith is the foundation on which all our hopes for the future are built. **To be certain.** Faith makes us able to treat as *real* those things we cannot see and touch. *Hatch* says: "So trust in God furnishes to the mind which has it a clear proof that the things to which God has testified exist, though they are not visible to the senses." [*We listen to the news every day, and accept by faith the things that are said, even though we could not verify them by personal experience.*]

2. **It was by their faith.** "We Christians ought to learn from the past! Look how these men of old won God's approval! As James said: 'His faith and his actions worked together; his faith was made perfect through his actions' (*James 2:22*)."

3. **That the universe was created by God's word.** The only knowledge we can have of this event which was not witnessed by human eyes, is through faith! In fact, even our knowledge of human history is only through faith in the testimony of others. **So that.** Our visible universe is the *effect* of the invisible God.

4. **That made Abel.** Since he did it by faith, it must have been in response to God's command. *MacKnight* says: "By faith, by rightly understanding and believing what was said concerning the seed of the woman's bruising the head of the serpent." Note that Abel offered a *sin offering*, while Cain offered a *fellowship offering*. **Abel still speaks.** By his example of faith. [Some connect this with *Heb. 12:24*.]

⁵It was faith that kept Enoch from dying. Instead, he was taken up to God, and nobody could find him, because God had taken him up. The scripture says that before Enoch was taken up he had pleased God. ⁶No man can please God without faith. For whoever comes to God must have faith that God exists and rewards those who seek him.

⁷It was faith that made Noah hear God's warnings about things in the future that he could not see. He obeyed God, and built an ark in which he and his family were saved. In this way he condemned the world, and received from God the righteousness that comes by faith.

⁸It was faith that made Abraham obey when God called him, and go out to a country which God had promised to give him. He left his own country without knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he lived in the country that God had promised him, as though he were a foreigner. He lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who received the same promise from God. ¹⁰For Abraham was waiting for the city which God has designed and built, the city with permanent foundations.

By faith Enoch was taken ⁵ from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without ⁶ faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

By faith Noah, when ⁷ warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

By faith Abraham, when ⁸ called to go to a place he would later receive as his possession, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith ⁹ he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward ¹⁰ to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

5. **That kept Enoch from dying.** *Gen. 5:24* Septuagint. Though living in a world of sinners, Enoch pleased God! Enoch's *faith and example* verifies the things said in *verse 1*.

6. **No man.** "Enoch's faith brought him to God. But unbelief will drive a man away from God. *Unbelief* calls God a liar!" For whoever comes. No one can come to God unless he believes: (1) that God exists; (2) that God rewards those who seek him. This also verifies *verse 1*.

7. **That made Noah hear.** The Flood was something as yet unknown in all of human history. Some think *Gen. 2:5-6* implies that it had never rained, when God warned Noah. He obeyed God. Noah acted on the basis of his faith! He condemned the world. His faith condemned those who would not believe. Compare *Matt. 12:41* and note. And received from God. See *1 Pet. 3:20-21*.

8. **That made Abraham obey.** He abandoned his native country and went into an unknown area, when God told him to do this. Without knowing where he was going. This is important, because it was not a glowing description of Canaan which sent him there, but the fact that he believed what God said.

9. **As though he were a foreigner.** He lived in tents, rather than building a city. This fact, along with Isaac and Jacob, is cited as proof that he understood God's promise to involve more than just an earthly *promised-land!*

10. **Was waiting for the city.** Abraham and the Patriarchs understood that their real blessing was their relationship with God, and that their earthly wealth was not very important (although it did come from God). We do not know how much Abraham knew of God's plans, but the point is: He believed God!!! [Compare *1 Cor. 2:6-10; Heb. 11:39-40.*]

¹¹It was faith that made Abraham able to become a father even though he was too old and Sarah herself was unable to have children. He trusted God to keep his promise. ¹²Though he was practically dead, from this one man there came as many descendants as there are stars in the sky, as many as the numberless grains of sand on the seashore.

¹³It was in faith that all these persons died. They did not receive the things God had promised, but from a long way off they saw and welcomed them, and admitted openly that they were foreigners and refugees on earth. ¹⁴Those who say such things make it clear that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵They did not think back to the country they had left; if they had, they would have had the chance to return. ¹⁶Instead, it was a better country they longed for, the heavenly country. And so God is not ashamed to have them call him their God, because he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand of the seashore.

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

11. **Able to become a father.** Abraham was one hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety. Sarah laughed when she heard the promise [Isaac means laughter]. But both Abraham and Sarah believed God could do what he promised! [Both the TEV and NIV follow the oldest and best Greek text in this verse.]

12. **Though he was practically dead.** A man who had reached his age without a son, could not reasonably expect to have one! The birth of Isaac was a supernatural event! **From this one man.** God kept his promise to Abraham! Compare *Gen. 15:5; 22:17*. [Abraham had other children before this, by slave women who were auxiliary wives. But only Isaac was the son of promise.]

13. **It was in faith.** The Patriarchs all died as *foreigners* in Canaan, without seeing their descendants become as many as the stars in the sky. But they died still believing that God would do what he promised to do!!!

14. **Those who say such things.** They said they were foreigners and refugees. This proves they did not think Canaan was the complete fulfillment of God's promise, and that they were still looking for something else.

15. **They did not think back.** The fact that they did not return to their country of origin (Chaldea) showed that they had renounced all to follow God! Compare *Gen. 24:5-8; Acts 7:5*.

16. **The heavenly country.** Their faith pointed them to this heavenly country! See *Phil. 3:20*. **And so God is not ashamed.** He might have been ashamed, if he failed to fulfill the promise. This proves the earthly Canaan was not the true land of promise! [This is also an example of what Christ said to the Sadducees (*Matt. 22:31*).]

¹⁷It was faith that made Abraham offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, when God put Abraham to the test. Abraham was the one to whom God had made the promise, yet he was ready to offer his only son as a sacrifice. ¹⁸God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that you will have descendants." ¹⁹Abraham reckoned that God was able to raise Isaac back from death—and, so to speak, Abraham did receive Isaac back from death.

²⁰It was faith that made Isaac promise blessings for the future to Jacob and Esau.

²¹It was faith that made Jacob bless each of the sons of Joseph just before he died; he leaned on the top of his walking stick and worshiped God.

²²It was faith that made Joseph, when he was about to die, speak of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and leave instructions about what should be done with his body.

²³It was faith that made the parents of Moses hide him for three months after he was born. They saw that he was a beautiful child, and they were not afraid to disobey the king's order.

By faith Abraham, when 17 God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though 18 God had said to him, "Through Isaac shall your promised offspring come." Abraham reasoned that God 19 could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

By faith Isaac blessed 20 Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

By faith Jacob, when he 21 was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when his 22 end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

By faith Moses' parents 23 hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

17. **That made Abraham offer his son.** Note: (1) Isaac was the only child of his marriage to Sarah; (2) God's promise was to come through Isaac; (3) yet God made him sacrifice Isaac, to test him! [A last-minute substitute was provided by God (*Gen. 22:10-14*).] **His only son.** Abraham did have other sons, but Isaac was *unique!* Compare *Gen. 16:15-16; 25:1-2*. See note on *John 3:16*.

18. **It is through Isaac.** This was God's promise in *Gen. 21:12*. Isaac was the *sole link* with the future, when God commanded his sacrifice! But see also *Gal. 3:16, 29*.

19. **Abraham reckoned.** This shows how strong his faith was in what God had promised him!!! **Back from death.** Even though God provided a last-minute substitute, in Abraham's mind, Isaac had died and been brought back to life. We see in this a *picture of Christ on the cross*.

20. **That made Isaac promise.** In blessing his two sons, Isaac was inspired by God to predict the future of both them and their descendants. See *Rom. 9:10-13* and notes.

21. **That made Jacob bless.** Again we see the inspiration of God, as Jacob included Joseph's two sons as heads of tribes. **He leaned.** That sick old man raised from his bed and stood, leaning on the top of his walking stick and worshipped God! This shows his faith!

22. **That made Joseph.** He made them promise to take his body into Canaan after his death. See *Gen. 50:24-26; Josh. 24:32*. This showed how sure he was that God would keep His promise.

23. **The parents of Moses.** Amram and his wife Jochebed. *Josephus* says: "God appeared to Amram in a dream, and promised him a son, who was to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage; and that Amram told this dream to his wife, and that they were led by it to hide their son." See *Acts 7:19-22*.

²⁴It was faith that made Moses, when he was grown, refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵He preferred to suffer with God's people rather than to enjoy sin for a little while. ²⁶He reckoned that to suffer scorn for the Messiah was worth far more than all the treasures of Egypt; because he kept his eyes on the future reward.

²⁷It was faith that made Moses leave Egypt without being afraid of the king's anger; he would not turn back, as though he saw the invisible God. ²⁸It was faith that made him establish the Passover and order the blood sprinkled on the doors, so that the Angel of Death would not kill the firstborn sons of the Israelites.

²⁹It was faith that enabled the Israelites to cross the Red Sea as if on dry land; when the Egyptians tried to do it, the water swallowed them up.

³⁰It was faith that made the walls of Jericho fall down, after the Israelites had marched around them for seven days. ³¹It was faith that kept the harlot Rahab from being killed with those who disobeyed God, because she gave the spies a friendly welcome.

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.

By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

24. **That made Moses.** He had been taught God's promises, and he believed them! See *Acts 7:23-29*.

25. **He preferred.** As the son of Pharaoh's daughter, the wealth and pleasure of the palace was his. The Jewish people were slaves and had nothing. But faith made him choose!

26. **For the Messiah.** From the time of *Gen. 3:15* onward, the message was: *Someone is coming!* Certainly no one before the time of the Cross really knew what God was going to do (*1 Cor. 2:6-10*), yet they knew a Messiah would come. See *Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22-23*.

27. **That made Moses leave Egypt.** The Exodus was one of the wonders of all time! There were 603,550 men of fighting age among the Israelites in the Exodus (*Num. 1:45-46*). Try to imagine the courage it took to do something like this!!!

28. **The Passover.** See *Exod. 12:3-30*. This was a picture of Christ, who is called "our Passover lamb" (*1 Cor. 5:7*).

29. **To cross the Red Sea.** [The NIV has "Sea of Reeds" in a footnote.] Perhaps two million Israelites took part in the crossing! It took faith for all involved to do this!!! See *Exod. 14:13-22; 1 Cor. 10:1-2*.

30. **The walls of Jericho.** *Joshua 6:8-21*. Archeology has verified that the walls fell outward!

31. **The harlot Rahab.** She acted on her belief that God had given Canaan to the Israelites! See *Joshua 2:1-22; Matt. 1:3-5* and notes.

³²Should I go on? There isn't enough time for me to speak of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. ³³Through faith they fought whole countries and won. They did what was right and received what God had promised. They shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴put out fierce fires, escaped being killed by the sword. They were weak but became strong; they were mighty in battle and defeated the armies of foreigners. ³⁵Through faith women received their dead raised back to life.

Others, refusing to accept freedom, died under torture in order to be raised to a better life. ³⁶Some were mocked and whipped, and others were tied up and put in prison. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went around clothed in skins of sheep or goats, poor, persecuted, and mistreated. ³⁸The world was not good enough for them! They wandered like refugees in the deserts and hills, living in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹What a record all of these have won by their faith! Yet they did not receive what God had

And what more shall I 32 say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who by 33 faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the 34 flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received 35 back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some 36 faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were 37 sawn in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the 38 world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

These were all commend- 39 ed for their faith, yet none of them received what had been

32. **Should I go on?** The Old Testament is full of such examples of faith in action! **Gideon.** *Judges 6:11.* **Barak.** *Judges 4:6.* **Samson.** *Judges 13:24.* **Jephthah.** *Judges 11:1.* **David.** *1 Sam. 16:1.* **Samuel.** *1 Sam. 1:20.* **And the prophets** such as Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, and the rest.

33. **Through faith.** This is the *common denominator* of all these heroes! **Fought whole countries**, as did Joshua. **Did what was right**, as did the Judges of Israel. **Shut the mouths of lions**, as did Daniel.

34. **Put out fierce fires.** *Dan. 3:17.* **Escaped being killed.** *Exod. 18:4.* **Weak but became strong.** *Isa. 38:5.* **Defeated the armies.** Gideon, Jonathan, etc.

35. **Women received their dead.** *1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37.* **Died under torture.** This was especially true of the terrible persecutions of the Jews mentioned in the Books of Maccabees (which were part of the Septuagint). They suffered in hope of eternal life!

36. **Some.** This was true of many persecutions recorded in Jewish history. Compare *Jer. 20:7-18.*

37. **They were stoned.** *Zechariah (2 Chron. 24:21).* **Sawn in two.** Jewish tradition says this is how Isaiah was killed. See also *1 Sam. 22:18; 1 Kings 19:10.* These were all things very familiar to the Jews.

38. **The world.** The world shows it isn't worthy of them, by rejecting them! Compare *Acts 22:22.* **They wandered.** *1 Kings 18:4; 1 Sam. 24:3;* and many more examples are given in the Books of Maccabees.

39. **What a record!** This shows the power of the faith in their lives!!! **Yet they did not receive.** They did not receive the promised heavenly country in their lifetimes on earth! Nor did they see God's Messiah! But they lived and died in faith - believing that God would keep His promise!!!

promised, ⁴⁰because God had decided on an even better plan for us. His purpose was that they would be made perfect only with us.

God Our Father

12 As for us, we have this large crowd of witnesses around us. Let us rid ourselves, then, of everything that gets in the way, and the sin which holds on to us so tightly, and let us run with determination the race that lies before us. ²Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and is now seated at the right side of God's throne.

³Think of what he went through, how he put up with so much hatred from sinful men! So do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up. ⁴For in your struggle against sin you have not yet had to fight to the point of being killed.

promised. God had planned ⁴⁰ something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

God Disciplines His Sons

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let ² us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him ³ who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

In your struggle against ⁴ sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your

40. **Because.** God's promise has not failed!!! He had something better, which they could not even imagine (1 Cor. 2:9). **His purpose.** That they and we might be made complete in the New Jerusalem!!! The whole spiritual family of Abraham, raised from death, will go into that heavenly world in one group at one time, after the Judgment!!! See *Luke 16:19-31* and notes. See also *Rev. 21:1-4* and notes.

1. **As for us.** All these examples of faith in chapter 11 are a large crowd of witnesses! **Let us rid ourselves.** The symbolism is from the Games. Runners practiced with weights on their feet. For the race, these are removed. To win the Christian race, we must get rid of worldly hopes and fears, obligations and friendships, and anything else that would *slow us down* in our race. See *2 Cor. 6:14* and note. **And the sin.** This also is from the symbolism of the Games. Sin (in general) is like the long flowing robes that would tangle in the legs of the runner and trip him up. No one would think of running with such a robe on them! No one should allow sin to trip them up! **With determination.** If you do not want to win, you probably won't! You must *stick with it!!!*

2. **Our eyes fixed on Jesus.** His example is much greater than any or all of the others!!! **On whom our faith depends.** He is both the *source* and the *Pioneer!* He has *broken trail* for us by going on ahead of us. See *Col. 1:18*. **Because of the joy.** The joy of being the Pioneer who destroys the power of the Devil and brings many sons and daughters to God by setting them free from sin and death!!! **The disgrace.** *Gal. 3:13*. **Seated.** *Heb. 8:1; 10:12*.

3: **Think.** If you feel discouraged, think about what he went through!!!

4. **For in your struggle.** "You have not been asked to do what Christ did!!!"

⁵Have you forgotten the encouraging words which God speaks to you as his sons?

“My son, pay attention when the Lord punishes you, and do not be discouraged when he rebukes you.

⁶Because the Lord punishes everyone he loves, and chastises everyone he accepts as a son.”

⁷Endure what you suffer as being a father's punishment; because your suffering shows that God is treating you as his sons. Was there ever a son who was not punished by his father? ⁸If you are not punished as all his sons are, it means you are not real sons, but bastards. ⁹In the case of our human fathers, they punished us and we respected them. How much more, then, should we submit to our spiritual Father and live! ¹⁰Our human fathers punished us for a short time, as it seemed right to them. But God does it for our own good, so that we may share his holiness.

blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

“My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

5. **Have you forgotten?** “You know, if you will remember, that sufferings are evidences of God's love for you!” The quotation is *Prov. 3:11-12* Septuagint. **When the Lord.** “Do not think it just as accidental act of blind fate (as the Gentiles do).” **Discouraged.** “This is not God's wrath for your sin! See what Jesus said in *Luke 13:1-5*.”

6. **Because.** “Instead of being expressions of his anger, punishments (chastisements) are proof of his love!” **Punishes.** *MacKnight* says: “This scripture, by showing God's Providence to be just and righteous, dispels the gloom which the misery and suffering which are part of life, may bring on us. We are here being trained and developed, by God who is our teacher. He uses the problems and suffering of life to teach us the good qualities and the character to serve him in this world, and to enjoy the pleasures of the next. May every suffering child of God understand this and believe it!” **Chastises.** “As a father spans his children, because he loves them!” See *Prov. 3:11-13*.

7. **Endure what you suffer.** “This is an expression of your Father's love!” **That God is treating you.** “He is giving you his blessing by causing you to grow spiritually!” **Who was not punished** by his father, who wanted to correct his faults and develop his character?

8. **If you are not.** “The fathers of bastards have no concern about the health, welfare, and education of them.”

9. **In the case of.** “They punished us for our faults and we respected them.” **How much more.** “Our spiritual Father uses more love and gentleness than our human fathers, and he will not give us more than we can bear (*1 Cor. 10:13*).”

10. **But God does it.** “We must be holy to live with him in Eternity!”

¹¹When we are punished, it seems to us at the time something to make us sad, not glad. Later, however, those who have been disciplined by such punishment reap the peaceful reward of a righteous life.

Instructions and Warnings

¹²Lift up your limp hands, then, and strengthen your weak knees! ¹³Keep walking on straight paths, so that the lame foot may not be disabled, but instead be healed.

¹⁴Try to be at peace with all men, and try to live a holy life, because no one will see the Lord without it. ¹⁵Be careful that no one turns back from the grace of God. Be careful that no one becomes like a bitter plant that grows up and troubles many with its poison. ¹⁶Be careful that no one becomes immoral or unspiritual like Esau, who for a single meal sold his rights as the

No discipline seems pleasant 11 at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Therefore, strengthen your 12 feeble arms and weak knees! Make level paths for your 13 feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Warning Against Refusing God

Make every effort to live 14 in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to 15 it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See 16 that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as

11. **At the time.** "It makes us sad, because of the pain it brings." **Later, however.** "Those who have been disciplined, trained, matured, prepared by such punishment reap the peaceful reward!" Compare *Psalm 119:67,71,75; Job 42:2-3; Rom. 8:28,37.* [For many years I have used the expression: *God spans his children.* This is certainly the idea in these verses. But it is not wrath!!! I imagine God saying something like this: "I love you! Everything I have is yours! I have amazing mercy! I am not angry with you. When I spank you, it is because I love you! I want you to grow spiritually! I want you to be strong and healthy! I am giving you blessings in each spanking, so that you will be a blessing to others! The whole world is programmed learning for you, because I want you to live with me forever! Open yourself to me and let me come in and heal you and forgive you. See, I am running to meet you! Listen! I stand at the door and knock! Open yourself to me! I love you! I love you!" See *Luke 15:11-32* and notes.]

12-13. **Lift up your limp hands.** "Push ahead with all your strength!" Compare *Job 4:1-6.*

14. **Try to be at peace.** "You must make an effort to be at peace with the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and even with your enemies!" **Try to live a holy life.** "You must make a positive effort to live pure and holy, so that you will be acceptable to God!" These people were contentious, and when one sinned through weakness, they would bring anger and belligerence against him in an unholy way. In doing this they would destroy themselves as well. See what Paul says in *Gal. 6:1-2.*

15. **That no one turns back.** The symbolism is a sheep who strays from the flock and has to be brought back. Christians are to work together to keep each other "headed in the right direction." **Like a bitter plant.** This refers to one of their fellow Christians who might poison the group with such things as sin, false teaching, and bitterness.

16. **Like Esau.** He is a *bad example* of the *bitter plant*. He thought so little of his rights as the older son, that he literally gave them away for a single meal. Immorality is always a danger, and many, like Esau, will be tempted to give away their future for a moment's pleasure.

older son. ¹⁷Afterward, you know, he wanted to receive his father's blessing; but he was turned back, because he could not find a way to change what he had done, even though he looked for it with tears.

¹⁸You have not come, as the people of Israel came, to what you can feel, to Mount Sinai with its blazing fire, the darkness and the gloom, the storm, ¹⁹the noise of a trumpet, and the sound of a voice. When the people heard the voice they begged not to have to hear another word, ²⁰because they could not bear the order which said, "If even an animal touches the mountain it must be stoned to death." ²¹The sight was so terrible that Moses said, "I am trembling and afraid!"

²²Instead, you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with its thousands of angels. ²³You have come to the joyful gathering of God's oldest sons, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, who is the judge of all men, and to

as the oldest son. Afterward, ¹⁷as you know, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

You have not come to a ¹⁸mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or ¹⁹to such a voice speaking words, that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

But you have come to ²²Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the first-²³born, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of right-

17. **Afterward, you know.** We can never *un-do* an act! Esau could not change what he had done, nor could his father remove the blessing which he had already given Jacob. Compare *Rev. 22:11* and notes.

18. **You have not come.** "So that you will understand why you must not throw away your rights as Abraham's descendants (*Gal. 3:18*), I want you to see the difference between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion." The point is to show that the blessings and obligations of the New Covenant are much better than those of the Old. Compare *Exod. 19*.

19. **When the people heard.** This shows the terrifying character of the revelation on which the Age of Moses was based. See *Exod. 20:18-19*.

20. **Because.** This command added to their terror!

21. **That Moses said.** *Deut. 9:19*. Even Moses himself was terrified by all this!!! The comparison makes us think of Elijah (*1 Kings 19:11-12*).

22. **To Mount Zion.** Zion is the symbol of the *kingdom of heaven*. See *Psalms 2:6; Joel 2:32; Isa. 1:27*. **The heavenly Jerusalem.** See *Rev. 21:2-3* and notes. **Angels.** Angels were part of the terror at Sinai. Here they are part of joy and praise! Compare *Heb. 1:14; Rev. 5:11-12*.

23. **Of God's oldest sons.** [The NIV adopts the general view of Theophylact, while the TEV follows Alford, Delitzsch, et. al.] ΠΡΩΤΟΤΟΚΟΝ is plural = *oldest sons*. Among the Jews, the oldest son got the largest share of the inheritance. In Christ's church, every man (and woman) is an "oldest son!" Their names are not written in "birth records" as the Jews wrote every name, but in heaven on the *Lamb's book of the living* (*Rev. 3:5; 13:8* and notes). The terror of Sinai stands in sharp contrast to the joy of Zion!!! Compare *Rev. 7:9-12* and notes. **Made perfect.** See *Heb. 11:39-40*.

the spirits of righteous men made perfect. ²⁴You have come to Jesus, who arranged the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that tells of much better things than Abel's blood.

²⁵Be careful, then, and do not refuse to hear him who speaks. Those who refused to hear him who gave the divine message on earth did not escape. How much less shall we escape, then, if we turn away from him who speaks from heaven! ²⁶His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, "I will once more shake not only the earth but heaven as well." ²⁷The words "once more" plainly show that the created things will be shaken and removed, so that the things that are not shaken will remain.

²⁸Let us be thankful, then, because we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us be grateful and worship God in a way that will please him, with reverence and fear; ²⁹because our God is indeed a destroying fire.

eous men made perfect, to ²⁴ Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See to it that you do not ²⁵ refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his ²⁶ voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once ²⁷ more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are ²⁸ receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is ²⁹ a consuming fire.

24. You have come to Jesus, rather than to Moses. Who arranged. By his death (*Heb. 9:15-17*). **To the sprinkled blood.** See notes on *Heb. 9:5, 13*. **Than Abel's blood.** His blood called for revenge (*Gen. 4:10*); Christ's blood pleads mercy for us!!!

25. Do not refuse to hear. See *verse 19; Heb. 3:16-19*. **If we turn away** by refusing to hear God's own Son!!!

26. His voice. See *verses 18-19*. Compare *Exod. 19:18*. **But now.** The quotation is *Haggai 2:6*. Many apply this to the Second Coming, but I think *MacKnight* is right in understanding *the earth* to be pagan idolatry, etc., and *heaven* to be the Mosaic worship and the Jewish state. See *Matt. 24:29-31* and note.

27. Once more. *MacKnight* says: "That the Jewish worship, and the heathen idolatry, and the powers which supported these forms of worship, are the things foretold here to be shaken, and that they are to be removed, is evident from God himself, who thus explains the shaking of the heavens and the earth (*Haggai 2:21-22*)." **Will remain.** *MacKnight* says: "For as it implies, that God would make but one alteration more in the religious worship of the world, it certainly follows, that the form to be substituted in place of the things to be shaken and removed, shall be permanent. The gospel therefore will remain to the end of the world, as the only form of religion acceptable to God."

28. Because we receive a kingdom. This is the language of *Dan. 7:18*. Christ's church = the Kingdom of heaven = the Kingdom of God. See notes on *Matt. 16:18-19; 19:28; 26:64; Luke 12:32; 22:69; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:6*. **In a way.** See *Heb. 9:14*.

29. Because our God. *Deut. 4:24*. Love must be our motivation, not fear of punishment (*1 John 4:18*). But all who refuse to worship God in a way that pleases Him, have reason to be afraid. This must be balanced against fear of persecution. But Christ is the EVIDENCE that God loves us (*John 3:16*)!!!

How to Please God

13 Keep on loving one another as brothers in Christ. ²Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did it and welcomed angels without knowing it. ³Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering, as though you were suffering as they are.

⁴Marriage should be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." ⁶Let us be bold, then, and say,

"The Lord is my helper,
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?"

Concluding Exhortations

13 Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you;
never will forsake you."
So we say with confidence,
"The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?"

1. **Keep on loving.** They had loved each other (*Heb. 6:10*), but in the general decay of faith, they were losing this (*Heb. 10:24-25; Matt. 24:12; Rev. 2:4-5*). Their love must make them one in Christ, and break down the walls between Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free men, men and women, etc. *Reuel Lemmons* says that without the mortar of love to hold us together, the church becomes just a pile of jagged rocks! (*Eph. 2:20-22*)

2. **To welcome strangers.** Persecution often made Christians homeless. It was important to be able to depend upon your fellow Christians! See note on *1 Tim. 3:2*. **And welcomed angels.** See *Gen. 18:1; Matt. 25:35*.

3. **In prison.** See note on *Heb. 10:34*. **Suffering.** See notes on *Heb. 10:33; 1 Cor. 12:26*. There was great danger that they would conceal their Christianity, disown their teachers and fellow Christians, and resent the disgrace and persecution which following Christ brought on them. For this reason, Christian love (treating others as God treats you through Christ) is **VITAL**, because all these other good qualities grow out of it!!!

4. **Marriage.** "Marriage is an honest thing, decreed by God, and should be honored by all people." *MacKnight* thinks this is pointed toward the Jewish Essenes, who generally viewed marriage as *vulgar*, and practiced celibacy. Compare *1 Tim. 4:3* and note. **Immoral.** See note on *Matt. 19:9* (immoral = unfaithful = fornication). **Adultery** is included in *immorality*, and specifically points to breaking marriage vows.

5. **From the love of money.** The *love* of money is a source of sin. See *1 Tim. 6:10; Eph. 5:5* and notes. The quotation is from *Deut. 31:6*; and other places. Read what Jesus said in *John 14:18*.

6. **Let us be bold.** "When you are persecuted, be bold, and say with the Psalmist (*Psalms 118:6* Septuagint), "The Lord is my helper." " **What can man?** Read Jesus's words in *Matt. 10:28*.

⁷Remember your former leaders, who spoke God's message to you. Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you from the right way. It is good for our souls to be made strong by God's grace, not by obeying rules about foods; those who obey these rules have not been helped by them.

¹⁰The priests who serve in the Jewish tent have no right to eat of the sacrifice on our altar. ¹¹The Jewish High Priest brings the blood of the animals into the Most Holy Place to offer it as a sacrifice for sins; but the bodies of the animals are burned outside the camp. ¹²For this reason Jesus also died outside the city gate, in order to cleanse the people from sin with his own blood.

¹³Let us, then, go to him outside the camp and

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make his people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

7. **Remember your former leaders.** James the brother of John, and James the Lord's brother, were both dead at this time. They had been closely connected with the Jerusalem church. There would be many others unknown to us. They were *good examples* to imitate!!!

8. **Jesus Christ.** The *former leaders* looked to Jesus as their Pioneer! He will always be the same powerful, gracious, faithful, and loving Savior!!! See *Heb. 1:12*.

9. **Do not let.** "Unauthorized teachers will tell you strange things about food, marriage, holy days, the sacrifices of the Law, etc. But don't be fooled into turning away from the *right way!*" Compare *1 Tim. 4:1-4; Col. 2:20-23. By God's grace.* Grace is contrasted with the *strange teachings*. The one excluded the other! See *Gal. 3:1-5*.

10. **Have no right to eat.** *MacKnight* says: "The sacrifice belonging to those who believe, is the sacrifice of himself, which Christ offered to God in heaven for the sins of the world: and the *eating* of that sacrifice does not mean the *literal eating* of it, but the partaking of the pardon which Christ has procured for sinners by that sacrifice." See notes on *John 6:53-56*. The Jewish priests did eat the sacrifice of their altar in the Jewish tent (*Heb. 9:8-10*). The point is that Christians are not to be seduced away from Christ by animal sacrifices.

11. **Burned outside the camp.** The blood was taken into the Most Holy Place and offered as a sacrifice for sin. But the bodies of the SIN OFFERINGS were not eaten at all, since the curse of sin was on them. This is cited as proof that the priests who serve in the Jewish tent have no right to share the Christian's sin offering!

12. **For this reason.** All these sin offerings were symbolic of Jesus THE SIN OFFERING!!! **Outside the city gate** = outside the camp. This was because he shared our sin (*2 Cor. 5:21*).

13. **Go to him.** "Be bold to give up your old associations, even though you will be branded as a traitor and a sinner, and your privileges as a Jew will be taken away (*Matt. 10:17*). But this cost is not too high when you measure it against what the Lord gives you!!!"

share his shame. ¹⁴For there is no permanent city for us here on earth; we are looking for the city which is to come. ¹⁵Let us, then, always offer praise to God as our sacrifice through Jesus, which is the offering presented by lips that confess his name. ¹⁶Do not forget to do good and to help one another, because these are the sacrifices that please God.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and follow their orders. They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give an account of their service to God. If you obey them, they will do their work gladly; else they will do it with sadness, and that would not be of any help to you.

¹⁸Keep on praying for us. We are sure we have a clear conscience, because we want to do the right thing at all times. ¹⁹And I beg you all the more to pray that God will send me back to you the sooner.

Prayer

²⁰God has raised from the dead our Lord Jesus who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep because of his death, by which the eternal covenant is

For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

Through Jesus therefore, ¹⁵ let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget ¹⁶ to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Obey your leaders and ¹⁷ submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Pray for us. We are sure ¹⁸ that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I ¹⁹ particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

May the God of peace, ²⁰ who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of

14. **No permanent city.** "We are strangers and foreigners here (*Phil. 3:20*)." In less than nine years, Jerusalem was demolished!!!

15. **Praise . . . through Jesus.** "We need no bloody sacrifices. The praise from our lips is our offering to God, through Jesus Christ! Our God wants a *living sacrifice* (*Rom. 12:1-2*)."

16. **Do not forget.** This also is part of praising God. See *Phil. 4:18*; *James 1:27* and notes.

17. **Obey your leaders.** Church leaders (see note on *Eph. 4:11*). In each congregation, the Church leader/elders were spiritual guards over the souls of the members. They must account to God for their work. **If you obey them.** "For your own good you should make the work of your leaders easy and joyful, for otherwise it will do you no good. Your unwillingness to hear them means that you are out of sympathy with their teaching and that will end in your condemnation."

18. **Keep on praying for us.** Paul (if he is the author) always asks for the prayers of the Christians! **A clear conscience.** "Even though you may not like my teaching in this letter, yet it is the truth which I received from God." *Johnson* thinks this is also said because Paul was arrested as a criminal in Jerusalem (*Acts 21:28*).

19. **And I beg.** He wants to be released from prison, so he can be with them in person, and help them.

20. **God has raised.** He is the God of peace! He has made peace through the death and resurrection of his Son!!! **The Great Shepherd.** See *Ezek. 34:23*; *John 10:11*. It was as the Great Shepherd that Christ gave his life for the sheep!!! **The eternal covenant** is here viewed in its start from the grave. Blood = death. Compare *Matt. 20:28*; *Mark 10:45*; *Heb. 2:9-17*; *Gal. 3:13*; *2 Cor. 5:14-21*.

sealed. ²¹May the God of peace provide you with every good thing you need in order to do his will, and may he, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases him. And to Christ be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

Final Words

²²I beg you, my brothers, to listen patiently to this message of encouragement; for this letter I have written you is not very long. ²³I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been let out of prison. If he comes soon enough, I will have him with me when I see you.

²⁴Give our greetings to all your leaders and to all God's people. The brothers from Italy send you their greetings.

²⁵May God's grace be with you all.

the sheep, equip you with 21 everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Brothers, I urge you to 22 bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.

I want you to know that 23 our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.

Greet all your leaders and 24 all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.

Grace be with you all. 25

21. **May the God of peace.** He is the source of everything we need to do his will! See *Phil. 2:12-13*. This doxology of praise is addressed to the God of peace, through our Lord Jesus. It is through Jesus, now reigning as Messiah, that all grace is given to God's people.

22. **To listen patiently.** "I am afraid you may be prejudiced against me, and I want you to listen patiently to the brief letter I have written to you on such important issues."

23. **Timothy.** We have no information about Timothy being in prison. The fact that the writer mentions him, implies that these Jewish Christians were not members of the *circumcision party*, or at least not hostile to Paul and his associate Timothy.

24. **Give our greetings** to your leaders and all God's people in Judea. **The brothers from Italy.** This shows he writes from Rome. This would agree with Paul's authorship.

25. **God's grace.** This is the usual closing word. God's grace was constantly on the mind of the Christians!!

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER FROM JAMES

At first glance, this Letter seems to be a series of disconnected maxims (pithy sayings), dealing with "Everyday Christian life." But as we look deeper into the reasons behind its writing, we learn to appreciate the way it is *put together*.

Beza thought this Letter was written specifically to the Jewish Christians scattered all over the world. Lardner thought it was written to all Jews, whether Christian or not. But certainly it is of value to every believer in Christ.

Many of the Jewish Christians had been Pharisees. They still held to the teachings which said, that: (1) "What is to be will be." Man is a helpless tool of *fate*. (2) "The Decrees of God." That is, *absolute predestination*. In the *idiom* of the Hebrew language, God is said to do what He permits to be done. But refusing to understand this, they distorted some things which Paul said (2 *Pet.* 3:15-16) on the basis of the two things mentioned above. Paul said that God has given the Gentiles over to corrupted minds (*Rom.* 1:28); that "So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me" (*Rom.* 7:17); "And he makes stubborn whom he wishes" (*Rom.* 9:18); "God made them dull of heart and mind" (*Rom.* 11:8). These false teachers then said: "The sinful actions of men are decreed by God, and no one can resist His will." "Since it is God who tempts men to sin, He is actually the source of men's sins." "Since Paul says faith saves, separate and apart from Law, merely believing in Christ will save a man." "Actions don't count! You can get drunk and murder somebody, die in the condition, and still go straight to heaven!"

It was necessary, then, that the "apostles of circumcision" who were still living, should use their authority to oppose these false ideas. The Letters from James through Jude deal with these matters. But James makes the strongest statement of all!

James, the brother of John, could not have written this Letter, since he was dead (*Acts 12:2*), killed by Herod. James the son of Alphaeus could have been the author, but from the earliest times, James the Lord's brother is the one accepted as the writer. Although not originally a believer (*John 7:5*), he is called *an apostle* (*Gal. 1:19*), although he was not one of the Twelve. He became a leader in the Jerusalem church (*Acts 15:13*), and may have been the leader of the *circumcision party*, although he certainly showed he was on the Lord's side at the Jerusalem Meeting in *Acts 15*. See also *Acts 21:18*; *Gal. 2:9*. Josephus tells us that Ananias, the high priest, convened the Sanhedrin and had this James stoned to death, around 63 A.D.

The Letter was probably written at Jerusalem, about 60 A.D.

THE LETTER FROM JAMES

1 From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ:
Greetings to all God's people, scattered over the whole world.

Faith and Wisdom

²My brothers! Consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, ³because you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure. ⁴Be sure that your endurance carries you all the way, without failing, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, he should pray to God, who will give it to him; because God gives generously and

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:
Greetings.

Trials and Temptations

Consider it pure joy, my **2**
brothers, whenever you face
trials of many kinds, be- **3**
cause you know that the test-
ing of your faith develops
perseverance. Perseverance **4**
must finish its work so that
you may be mature and com-
plete, not lacking anything. **5**
If any of you lacks wisdom,
he should ask God, who gives
generously to all without
finding fault, and it will be

1. From James. Both Paul (*Gal. 1:19*), and Josephus, the Jewish Historian, call this James *the Lord's brother*. See the introduction to this Letter. A **servant**. He was not an apostle in the same sense as were the Twelve and Paul [On the meaning of *apostle*, see note on *Heb. 3:1*] **To all God's people.** Twelve Tribes = Jewish Nation/Race = God's People. **Scattered.** If we apply this *literally*, it would mean the Greek-speaking Jews (see note on *Acts 6:1*). It is probably better to follow *Lardner* and apply it to all Christians, Jew and Gentile.

2. My brothers! This phrase appears again and again, to emphasize the ONE faith and life which Christians share in Christ, both Jew and Gentile. **Consider yourself fortunate.** *Trials* do not make you glad when you are suffering through them, but the *results* ought to make you *joyful!* Compare *Heb. 12:5-13* and notes. Many were becoming *restive* because they were suffering because of Christ; and their unbelieving countrymen were saying that the suffering proved God was angry with them because they had accepted Christ. Compare *1 Thess. 2:13-16*.

3. Because. God's purpose in this is to train you to endure!

4. Be sure. Don't be a *fatalist*, who thinks he is a passive plaything of *fate*, but accept these things as the discipline of a loving Father. **Perfect and complete.** "*For endurance is a strong power, and patience produces many good things.*"

5. Lacks wisdom. This verse begins a new thought. *Wisdom* is the cluster of good qualities which form true religion. Jewish thought placed a lot of emphasis on the ethical side of religion. Compare *James 3:17*; *Prov. 8:22-31*. **Pray to God.** "*It is the Lord who gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from him*" (*Prov. 2:6*). **Who will give it.** Being put right with God through Christ, the Christian looks to God as *Father!* This brings man up closer to God's level. God is available to all who are *his children* in Christ! God will give wisdom generously to all his people who ask him for it! **Graciously.** "He will not be angry with you because you did not already have wisdom!"

graciously to all. ⁶But you must believe when you pray, and not doubt at all. Whoever doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven and blown about by the wind. ⁷⁻⁸Such a person is a hypocrite, undecided in all he does, and he must not think that he will receive anything from the Lord.

Poverty and Riches

⁹The poor brother must be glad when God lifts him up, ¹⁰and the rich brother when God brings him down. For the rich will pass away like the bloom of a wild plant. ¹¹The sun rises with its blazing heat and burns the plant; its bloom falls off, and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way the rich man will be destroyed while busy conducting his affairs.

Testing and Tempting

¹²Happy is the man who remains faithful under trials, because when he succeeds in passing the test he will receive as his reward the life which

given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the victor's crown, the life God has promised to those who love him.

6. **But you must believe.** This is absolutely necessary to SINCERE prayer. Compare what Jesus said in *Mark 11:23-24*, and notes. **Whoever doubts.** *Aphraates* quotes the following as something which Jesus said: "Do not doubt, so that you will not sink into the world, as Simon (Peter), when he doubted, began to sink into the lake." As a wave in the sea is driven first one way and then the other, so one who sinks in indecision never really comes to trust God.

7-8. **Such a person is a hypocrite.** He is unreliable, and has no *standard plan* of conduct or goal. Because he doesn't really know what he wants, he can never get anything! **That he will receive anything.** *MacKnight* says: "Now, let not that man think, that, by the mere uttering of words not accompanied with sincere desires and actions, he shall receive any spiritual blessings from the Lord."

9. **The poor brother.** This verse begins a new thought. Since James is usually *plain-spoken* in what he says, we may take this statement at *face value*. If the poor brother is blessed by God and becomes wealthy, he should not be ashamed of this. There is no *virtue* in being poor.

10. **And the rich brother.** If persecution takes away the rich man's wealth, he must be glad. After all, he is escaping the temptations and dangers that come to the rich. In any case, wealth is not a permanent thing!

11. **In the same way.** The unbelieving Jews believed wealth was proof of God's blessing. James shows how temporary it really is! As a rich man is conducting his affairs, a robber, or inflation, or some other such thing can make him penniless in a flash! [*Johnson* views these three verses as saying the same thing as *1 Cor. 7:17-24*.]

12. **Happy is the man.** Jubilant!!! This verse begins a new thought. The *key* to this section of six verses is: "God tempts no one to do evil." **Who remains faithful.** Since life is like the puff of smoke that vanishes, it is the one (whether rich or poor) who remains faithful under trials, who will receive the *life* which God has promised to those who love him.

God has promised to those who love him. ¹³If a man is tempted by such testing, he must not say, "This temptation comes from God." For God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But a person is tempted when he is drawn away and trapped by his own evil desire. ¹⁵Then his evil desire conceives and gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my dear brothers! ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven; it comes down from God, the Creator of the heavenly lights. He himself does not change or cause darkness by turning. ¹⁸By his own will he brought us into being through the word of truth, so that we should have first place among all his creatures.

When tempted, no one ¹³ should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one ¹⁴ is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, ¹⁵ after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Don't be deceived, my ¹⁶ dear brothers. Every good ¹⁷ and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose ¹⁸ to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

13. **If a man is tempted.** "If trials and suffering cause a man to fall into sin, he must not say, 'This temptation comes from God,' as the false teachers are saying." **For God.** "God cannot be seduced by evil, nor does He himself use evil things to seduce anyone!" God does permit temptation to come to us, and in this sense He is *said* to tempt people, but He who is INFINITELY HOLY cannot himself be the source of temptation!!! *Verses 14 explains.*

14. **By his own evil desire.** This is really what Paul was saying in *Rom. 7:14-25*. Any temptation depends upon our own response. This is why Jesus could be tempted without sinning (*Heb. 2:18; 4:15*). God limits the amount of temptation which comes to us (*1 Cor. 10:13*). But our own evil desire draws us away and traps us *when we permit it to do so!!!*

15. **Then his evil desire.** The false teachers passionately loved adultery, so James uses the symbolism of a birth. Evil desire conceives, grows, and gives birth to sin. See *2 Pet. 2:14*. **When it is full-grown.** When sin comes to maturity, it gives birth to death (*eternal death*).

16. **Do not be deceived!** "Do not let the false teachers fool you into believing that God himself is the source of sin, and will not punish it!"

17. **Every good gift.** "To demonstrate that God cannot seduce people with sin and evil, I tell you that God himself is the source of every *good gift* that blesses us (such as a sound mind, health, good fortune, etc.), and every *perfect present* (such as the forgiveness of sin, God's grace, eternal life) comes down out of heaven from God!!!" **Of the heavenly lights.** To the Jewish mind, God's creation of light is a demonstration of His goodness! Compare *1 John 1:5*. **He himself.** "He does not rise and set like the sun and the moon! Will He give us holy desires one time, and then seduce us to do evil??? NO! He is always the source of GOOD, and nothing but good!!! It is blasphemy, then, to say that God seduces men to sin so He will have an excuse to bring misery on them."

18. **By his own will.** "The spiritual birth made possible by God's act in Christ was not something God was forced to do. He did this by his own free will, because He loves us." **He brought us into being.** "We are spiritually brought into being by the word of truth, and born of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*)."
First place. The symbolism would be familiar to the Jew. Just as the first fruits herald the new season, so those who are brought into being by the word of truth declare a new order of things in the spiritual world. God is *calling* a spiritual harvest out of the world and into Eternity!!! See *Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:20*.

Hearing and Doing

¹⁹Remember this, my dear brothers! Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak, and slow to become angry. ²⁰Man's anger does not achieve God's righteous purpose. ²¹Rid yourselves, then, of every filthy habit and all wicked conduct. Submit to God and accept the word that he plants in your hearts, which is able to save you.

²²Do not fool yourselves by just listening to his word. Instead, put it into practice. ²³Whoever listens to the word but does not put it into practice is like a man who looks in a mirror and sees himself as he is. ²⁴He takes a good look at himself and then goes away, and at once forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But whoever looks closely into the perfect law that sets men free, who keeps on paying attention to it, and does not simply listen and then forget it, but puts it into practice

Listening and Doing

My dear brothers, take 19 note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man's anger does 20 not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all 21 moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Do not merely listen to the 22 word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Any- 23 one who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after 24 looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the 25 man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he

19. **Remember this.** This verse begins a new thought. Compare *Rom. 12:1*. **Everyone must be.** "Be quick to hear the Good News of God's act in Christ; but be slow to speak about it until you understand it; and be slow to become angry in religious matters. Incomplete knowledge is dangerous in the hands of one who does not know what he is doing!"

20. **Man's anger.** "Anger is a normal human response, and some use anger and persecution to try to bring others to their beliefs. But this cannot bring the faith which pleases God. It can only make men hypocrites by forcing them to profess what they really do not believe. A blind, furious zeal in religious matters is a *subversive evil*, which will destroy the one who uses it."

21. **Rid yourselves.** "Get rid of those things which will destroy you!" **Every filthy habit.** Evil desires, greed, drunkenness, immorality, etc. The false teachers were *addicted* to these things. **All wicked conduct.** This is the deep hostility which leads people to do as much meanness and evil to each other as they can. **Submit to God.** The word which God plants in your heart is the Good News (compare *John 6:45*). But it has value **ONLY** as you submit to God! Jesus explained this by the parable of the Sower (*Matt. 13:1-23*).

22. **Do not fool yourself.** "You do not *practice what you preach* because you think the Scriptures are a *good-luck charm*, and that if you listen to them being read, you will have life. But you are only fooling yourself, because you must put it into practice! (*Matt. 7:24-27*.)"

23-24. **Is like a man.** "A man looks into a mirror and a few minutes later has forgotten what he looked like."

25. **The perfect law that sets men free.** The Good News is the *perfect law that sets men free*, because: (1) It frees men and women from the slavery of their *human nature* and gives them back *free will*; (2) It freed the Jews from the Law of Moses, which was a curse; (3) It sets believers free from the guilt of sin and from the punishment to come; (4) It shows us that everyone is entitled to receive and obey the Good

—that person will be blessed by God in what he does.

²⁶Does anyone think he is a religious man? If he does not control his tongue his religion is worthless and he deceives himself. ²⁷What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering, and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world.

Warning against Prejudice

2 My brothers! As believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, you must never treat people in different ways, according to their outward appearance. ³Suppose a rich man wearing a gold ring and fine clothes comes to your meeting, and a poor man in ragged clothes also

has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father ²⁷ accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Favoritism Forbidden

2 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man ² comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in.

News; (5) Because it forbids prejudice. In what he does. In the things he does in response to the Lord's commands, as he sees them in the perfect law that sets men free. Faith cannot be divorced from action, as James 2:22 shows. See also Matt. 7:21-23.

26. If he does not. "If you think of yourself as religious, but rant and rave against those who differ with you in religious opinion (and think of this ranting and raving as a mark of devotion to God), your religion is worthless!" You can see this in certain types of people, such as in Acts 17:5. "If you do not have enough faith to control your tongue, you do not have enough to be saved!"

27. What God the Father. "Hypocrites think religion is doing religious things, but here is what God the Father says is religious." Note: the word translated religion means worship through external things. Christians are to think of good works as being worship to God! But, only those things which God has commanded. Pure and genuine religion is this: Faith is made perfect through actions. MacKnight says: "According to the apostle, religion does not consist so much in the warmth of affection with which we worship God, as in good works." Even driving out demons and performing miracles cannot substitute for doing what the Father wants you to do! See what Jesus said in Matt. 7:21-23. "Value this as the best sacrifice and the greatest worship, to offer yourself as good and as just as possible!" Compare Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:28; Matt. 25:31-46.

1. My brothers! See note on James 1:2. As believers. "You are new in your union to Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)." You must never. "You must never be guilty of prejudice and discrimination in your dealings with people!" Christian love is acting toward others as God has acted toward you in Christ. Since God treats all men on the same basis (Acts 10:34), the believer in Christ must act the same way in his dealings with others. The Law also banned discrimination (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 16:19).

2. Suppose. "This is an example to show you that you have been doing wrong by discriminating against people." There was a much wider gap between rich and poor in New Testament times, and the middle-class probably did not exist as it does in our society.

comes. ³If you show more respect to the well-dressed man and say to him, "Have this best seat here," but say to the poor man, "Stand, or sit down here on the floor by my feet," then you are guilty of creating distinctions among yourselves and making judgments based on evil motives.

⁵Listen, my dear brothers! God chose the poor people of this world to be rich in faith and to possess the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him. ⁶But you dishonor the poor! Who are the ones who oppress you and drag you before the judges? The rich! ⁷They are the ones who speak evil of that good name which has been given to you.

⁸You will be doing the right thing if you obey the law of the Kingdom, which is found in the scripture, "Love your fellow-man as yourself." ⁹But if you treat people according to their outward appearance, you are guilty of sin, and the

If you show special attention ³
to the man wearing fine
clothes and say, "Here's a
good seat for you," but say
to the poor man, "You stand
there," or "Sit on the floor
by my feet," have you not ⁴
discriminated among your-
selves and become judges
with evil thoughts?

Listen, my dear brothers: ⁵
Has not God chosen those
who are poor in the eyes of
the world to be rich in faith
and to inherit the kingdom
he promised those who love
him? But you have insulted ⁶
the poor. Is it not the rich
who are exploiting you? Are
they not the ones who are
dragging you into court? Are ⁷
they not the ones who are
slandering the noble name of
him to whom you belong?

If you really keep ⁸
the royal law found in Scripture,
"Love your neighbor as your-
self," you are doing right.
But if you show favoritism, ⁹
you sin and are convicted by

3. **If you show more respect.** The point is: clothes, not character, is the basis used to decide the value of each person. God does not allow this!!!

4. **Then you are guilty.** (1) Of creating distinctions where God has made none; (2) Of allowing evil motives to influence you. These things destroy the unity of the worshipers, and create the same kind of problems that were in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

5. **Listen, my dear brothers!** "To show it is wrong to respect the rich more than the poor, I ask you to hear this." **God chose the poor.** See 1 Cor. 1:26-27. Remember the Jews felt the rich had been more blessed by God, and were therefore closer to Him. But James shows that God himself chose the poor and they have the right to come to Him. **And to possess the Kingdom.** Compare Matt. 5:3 and note.

6. **But you dishonor the poor!** "Contrary to the example set for you by God himself, you create distinctions and allow evil motives to influence you." **Who are the ones?** The Bible usually speaks of the rich in a bad sense, because it is looking at those who make their wealth by oppressing the poor. Such men as Abraham and the Patriarchs, Job, Joseph of Arimathea, etc., were rich through honest means and were not condemned for it. But James is thinking of those who *oppress* the poor!

7. **They are the ones.** It was the *rich Jewish leaders* as a class that blasphemed the name of Jesus and said he was a phony (fraud) who deserved the death he died. Yet some in the church were showing more respect to these, than to the poor brothers!!! [The *synagogue* was the center of Jewish life, and would be used for both Jewish and Christian worship at this time. Compare Acts 2:46; 21:20.]

8. **The right thing.** This has always been God's law, both through Moses and through Christ. The quotation is from Lev. 19:18; also Rom 13:9; and see Gal. 4:14.

9. **But.** James makes this as strong as he can! It is a deliberate, conscious act of sin if they make distinctions on the basis of outward appearance (social rank, wealth, clothes, etc.) **The Law** condemns you as a lawbreaker, because it forbids such discrimination, and requires you to love your fellow-man as yourself.

Law condemns you as a lawbreaker. ¹⁰Whoever breaks one command of the Law is guilty of breaking them all. ¹¹For the same one who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Even if you do not commit adultery, you have become a lawbreaker if you murder. ¹²Speak and act as people who will be judged by the law that sets men free. ¹³For God will not show mercy when he judges the man who has not been merciful; but mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith and Actions

¹⁴My brothers! What good is it for someone to say, "I have faith," if his actions do not prove it? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't

the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles at just one point, is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, ¹¹"Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

Speak and act as those ¹²who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment ¹³without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Faith and Deeds

What good is it, my ¹⁴brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is ¹⁵without clothes and daily

10. **Whoever.** The Jews taught that if you kept *one* commandment, you would be given credit for all the rest, even though you did not keep them. James shows that if you break one, you have broken them all!! It is not possible then, to make up for (expiate) a sin by a *good work*. James explains this in the next verse.

11. **For the same one.** The same God gave each command, and in breaking any command, you sin against the same Lawgiver. **Even if you do not,** "The fact that you did not commit adultery would not make up for the sin of murder. In the same way, if you create distinctions on the basis of outward appearance, the fact that you do other things the way God commands cannot make up for it and take away your guilt."

12. **Speak and act.** "Since you know you will be judged by the *law that sets men free* (see note on *James 1:25*), be sure you speak and act so that the Good News will not condemn you!!!" The law of Christ (the Good News) is a *new attitude and spirit*. See *Rom. 8:2, 15* and notes. Compare *Matt. 5:22, 28* and notes.

13. **For God.** The way we treat others will be the way God treats us!! Jesus taught this in many ways. See *Matt. 7:1-5; 18:21-35; 25:31-46*. **Mercy triumphs over judgment.** *MacKnight* says: "But at that day mercy will triumph over judgment to him who showed mercy." See *Psalms 18:25-27*.

14. **My brothers.** See note on *James 1:2*. James begins a study of *faith and actions*. Because some have misunderstood the nature of faith, they have said: (1) James deliberately contradicts and corrects the teaching of Paul. (2) James did not even know what Paul taught, and so writes without any reference to Paul's understanding of faith and actions. Neither of these can be right!! *2 Pet. 3:16* shows us that some things which Paul said were being misunderstood, *perhaps deliberately*. See Introduction to James. Therefore, James writes: (3) To correct those who misunderstood what Paul said about faith and actions. **If his actions do not prove it?** Actions prove faith, and are evidence of spiritual life. **Can that faith?** See *verse 19*.

15. **Suppose.** "To show you the foolishness of claiming to have faith without the proof of actions, think about this example."

have enough to eat. ¹⁶What good is there in your saying to them, "God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!"—if you don't give them the necessities of life? ¹⁷So it is with faith: if it is alone and has no actions with it, then it is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, "One person has faith, another has actions." My answer is, "Show me how anyone can have faith without actions. I will show you my faith by my actions." ¹⁹Do you believe that there is only one God? Good! The demons also believe—and tremble with fear. ²⁰You fool! Do you want to be shown that faith

food. If one of you says to ¹⁶ him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by ¹⁷ itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

But someone will say, ¹⁸ "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without ¹⁸ deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one ¹⁹ God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

You foolish man, do you ²⁰ want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

16. **What good?** "If you ask God's blessing on them and pray that *somebody else* will take care of them, but do not yourself give them the necessities of life, what help have you been to them??? Will such speeches feed and clothe the poor???"

17. **So it is with faith.** "Faith which does not prove itself by actions is as worthless as good wishes to the poor without food and clothing."

18. **But someone will say.** Jewish teaching said good works placed an obligation on God, and all who had more good works than bad works to their credit, would be saved. The Good News placed salvation entirely on *Christ-on-the-cross*, that is, on the *merit* of his sacrifice. Therefore some Jewish Christians went to the opposite extreme and said it made no difference at all what you did or didn't do. **My answer is.** "Show me, if you can, how anyone can have faith without doing good. Faith can only be identified by the good actions which it produces. I can easily show you my faith by the actions it has produced in my life." See *verse 24*.

19. **Do you believe?** The basic belief of the Jew was stated in the *Shema* "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (*Deut. 6:4-6*). This is the *profession of faith* which every Jew makes on his death-bed. This *Shema* was thought of in superstitious terms, as a *good luck charm* which would keep away evil spirits, etc. **The demons also believe.** "Belief in the One True God is good! But, if you merely accept the fact of God, and this belief does not translate itself into action in your life, you are really no different from the demons. As the faith they have will not save them, neither will your faith save you, even though it is both real and true as it looks to God." A. C. wrote: "To believe in Christ, is to receive him in all the glory of his character, both personal and official; to trust in him, in all the relationships which he has to us, as our Prophet, our Priest, and our King; to see in him our only hope and refuge; and renouncing ourselves, our confidence in ourself, our righteousness, and our own merit, to seize him as our only Rock-foundation, and to look to *him only* as the "Lord our righteousness," as our salvation and as our life." Faith is the link between man and God! FAITH = LOVE = ACTION. Compare *Heb. 11:1* and note.

20. **You fool!** [This is not the same word translated *worthless fool* in *Matt. 5:22*. *KENOS* = empty, to no purpose, foolish, senseless.] "Faith without actions cannot put anyone right with God!" We *reach out through faith* to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make ourselves part of it.

without actions is useless? ²¹How was our ancestor Abraham put right with God? It was through his actions, when he offered his son Isaac on the altar. ²²Can't you see? His faith and his actions worked together; his faith was made perfect through his actions. ²³And the scripture came true that said, "Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." And so Abraham was called God's friend. ²⁴You see, then, that a man is put right with God by what he does, and not because of his faith alone.

²⁵It was the same with prostitute Rahab. She was put right with God through her actions, by welcoming the Jewish messengers and helping them escape by a different road.

²⁶So then, as the body without the spirit is dead, also faith without actions is dead.

Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

21. **How?** "Our ancestor Abraham is an example of what I am talking about. **It was through his actions.**" The whole life of Abraham was living proof that he believed God! I especially point you to the incident with Isaac. He did not question God's command to him, but went up on the mountain to sacrifice his son." Compare *Heb. 11:17-19* and notes. See also *1 John 4:18*.

22. **Can't you see?** This is emphatic! **Worked together.** *Lightfoot* says that these words "bridge over the gulf which seems to separate the language of St. Paul and St. James. Both assert a principle of practical energy, as opposed to a barren, inactive theory." The doctrine of "faith only" actually takes the merit away from Christ and puts it in *faith* itself.

23. **And the scripture.** Note the climax which James uses!!! Abraham's faith being made perfect through his actions made this come true!!! The quotation is from *Gen. 15:6* Septuagint. God accepted Abraham as righteous (imputed righteousness to him) because he believed Him! **God's friend.** *Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7.* Compare this with *2 Cor. 5:18-19*.

24. **You see, then.** "The example of Abraham proves that the faith that puts people right with God is a faith that becomes perfect through actions!" *MacKnight* says "Wherefore, from Moses ascribing (crediting) the justification of Abraham to the work of offering up Isaac, ye see that by works proceeding from faith a man is justified, and not by faith without works."

25. **The prostitute Rahab.** This verse is proof that God's acceptance of a person does not depend upon their past. She was well known to the Jews, because she was the great-great-grandmother of David the king. Because she believed God, she acted on the basis of her faith. In doing this, she showed the same kind of faith that Abraham had. See *Joshua 2:3-11; Heb. 11:31; Matt. 1:3-5*.

26. **So then.** *MacKnight* says: "In no way but by faith accompanied with works can any one be justified." The body without the spirit has no real life or existence. In the same way, faith that does not reach out through actions to seize the sacrifice of Christ and continue to hold firmly to it, has no real life or existence and cannot put a man right with God. [This does not contradict any of Paul's teaching about faith, as *verse 22* shows. Salvation is not achieved, but seized! Even though *Jesus paid it all!* - human response to God's act in Christ is still necessary. If this is not true, then the preaching

The Tongue

3 My brothers! Not many of you should become teachers, because you know that we teachers will be judged with greater strictness than others. ²All of us often make mistakes. The person who never makes a mistake in what he says is perfect, able also to control his whole being. ³We put a bit into the mouth of a horse to make it obey us, and we are able to make it go where we want. ⁴Or think of a ship: big as it is, and driven by such strong winds, it can be steered by a very small rudder, and goes wherever the pilot wants it to go. ⁵So it is with the tongue: small as it is, it can boast about great things.

Just think how large a forest can be set on fire

Taming the Tongue

3 Not many of you should act as teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. 2

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small 3
4
5

of the Good News would have no meaning! Paul shows us that actions without faith cannot put us right with God, and so he emphasizes *faith*. But Paul also shows us that *faith alone* is worthless (*1 Cor. 13:2*). James shows us that faith without actions cannot put us right with God, and emphasizes *actions*. Neither *faith alone* nor *actions alone* can put us right with God; only faith made perfect through actions can do that.]

1. **My brothers.** See note on *James 1:2*. **Not many of you.** Some, in their conceit, wanted to immediately become teachers. The burning passion of certain Jews was to teach the Law of Moses to the Gentile Christians. But these Jews had not yet gotten rid of their prejudices and misunderstandings (*1 Tim. 1:7*). These teachers of the Law in Christ's church were the great distorters of the Good News! **With greater strictness.** James includes himself in this. Because teachers have great influence on others, they will be judged with greater strictness. The ones who make dogmatic statements are usually the ones with the least knowledge of their subject. [For this reason I have not relied on my own scholarship, but have drawn heavily from the minds and abilities of many individuals. RDI]

2. **All of us.** No Christian is completely without sin! This included James himself. See what John says in *1 John 1:8-10*. But it is more serious when a teacher makes a mistake. **In what he says.** James is thinking of the *ranting and raving* which certain Jews did in arguing matters of religion, as well as teaching false things. Compare *Matt. 5:22* and note. We can also apply this to everyday life, since the *tongue* demonstrates the *inner man*.

3. **We put a bit.** "We use a *bit* in the mouth of a horse to control it. Such a small thing has great influence."

4. **A very small rudder.** "A rudder is small compared to the ship, but it controls its direction."

5. **So it is.** "Even though the tongue is small, it can control us, just like the bit controls the horse or the rudder controls the ship." **It can boast.** *Mayor* says: "There is no idea of vain boasting, the whole argument turns upon the reality of the power which the tongue possesses." **Can be set on fire!** Bitterness existed in certain Synagogues (which were used by both Jews and Christians), fanned into flame by the ranting and raving of various "teachers." James wants to make peace. The tongue of one speaker can set ablaze all the combustible material which is created by fighting and quarreling! So it is vital to the survival of the messianic community that tongues be controlled!

by a tiny flame! ⁶And the tongue is like a fire. It is a world of wrong, occupying its place in our bodies and spreading evil through our whole being. It sets on fire the entire course of our existence with the fire that comes to it from hell itself. ⁷Man is able to tame, and has tamed, all other creatures—wild animals and birds, reptiles and fish. ⁸But no man has ever been able to tame the tongue. It is evil and uncontrollable, full of deadly poison. ⁹We use it to give thanks to our Lord and Father, and also to curse our fellowmen, created in the likeness of God. ¹⁰Words of thanksgiving and cursing pour out from the same mouth. My brothers! This should not happen! ¹¹No spring of water pours out sweet and bitter water from the same opening. ¹²A fig tree, my brothers, cannot bear olives; a grapevine cannot bear figs; nor can salty water produce fresh water.

The Wisdom from Above

¹³Is there someone among you who is wise and understanding? He is to prove it by his good life, by his good deeds performed with humility and

spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 6

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 7 8

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. 9 10 11 12

Two Kinds of Wisdom

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 13

6. **And the tongue.** "Not only will the tongue destroy others when it is uncontrolled, but it destroys the one who uses it as well!" **From hell itself.** The ranting and raving of these teachers did not come from God, but was from hell itself and totally evil! Compare *James 1:20* and note.

7. **Man is able to tame.** "Human ingenuity has tamed and used all the other creatures of the earth!"

8. **Has ever been able.** *MacKnight* says: "But the tongue of other men no one is able to subdue." *Verse 2* shows that it is possible to control our own tongue, even though few do it. **Full of deadly poison.** The tongue often brings death to those on whom it is *let loose!* See *Psalms 140:1-3*.

9. **We use it.** James includes himself, but he aims this in particular against certain Jewish "teachers." They would never speak the name of God without adding: "Blessed be He." But these same Jews (who did not believe in Christ) often cursed and damned the Christians in their synagogues. We are no better, if we act the same way! **Created in the likeness of God.** See *Gen. 1:26-27*. The lesson is that he who curses the man who was created in the likeness of God is *effectively* cursing the God he claims to praise. See *1 John 4:20-21*.

10. **Words.** These are a contradiction! If you love God and praise Him, you cannot curse your fellowmen. You cannot be both holy and unholy at the same time.

11. **No spring of water.** "No such stupidity is found in the natural world!"

12. **A fig tree.** "A fig tree cannot produce such opposite fruits!" **Nor can salty water.** "It is just as unnatural for the same tongue to praise God and curse man made in the likeness of God!"

13. **Is there someone?** "Although you cannot control other men's tongues, you can control your own. Someone who is wise and understanding must prove it by his good life. True wisdom shows itself in good actions performed with humility and wisdom."

wisdom. ¹⁴But if in your heart you are jealous, bitter, and selfish, then you must not be proud and tell lies against the truth. ¹⁵This kind of wisdom does not come down from heaven; it belongs to the world, it is unspiritual and demonic. ¹⁶Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there is also disorder and every kind of evil. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is pure, first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy. ¹⁸And goodness is the harvest that is produced from the seeds the peacemakers plant in peace.

But if you harbor bitter envy ¹⁴ and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

But the wisdom that comes ¹⁷ from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

Friendship with the World

4 Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your desires

Submit Yourselves to God

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you?

14. **But if in your heart.** Compare *Matt. 15:18* and note. "If you have jealousy, bitterness, and selfishness in your heart against others, and this comes off your tongue as curses against others, you must not be proud as though these things were wisdom. To be proud of such action is to lie against the truth."

15. **This kind of wisdom.** The kind that produces jealousy, bitterness, and selfishness. Heaven is not the source of such things! **It belongs to the world.** "This unholy method of trying to spread religion by ranting and raving is not God's way! It is both unspiritual and comes from demons! The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The wisdom referred to, - acute argument, subtle distinctions, clever controversia, methods which took small account of truth so long as a temporary point was gained, skilful dialectics, bitter sarcasms, the more enjoyed and triumphed in if the poisonous shaft came home and rankled in the breast of the opponent, - in short, all these tricks of the unscrupulous controversialist which are none the less contemptible for being clever, - this was wisdom of a certain kind."

16. **Where.** "Where there is jealousy because of opinions and selfishness which brings *party spirit* in defending them, there you will also find disorder (*Acts 17:5*) and every kind of evil deed."

17. **But the wisdom from above.** "This is the kind of wisdom which ought to guide every teacher of religion!" **Pure.** Not adulterated with false teaching and evil desires. **Peaceful,** in contrast to the quarreling and fighting of the other "wisdom" (*verse 15*). **Gentle,** not violent, harsh, or relentless. **Friendly.** Full of good will toward others, easily persuaded to forgive. **Compassion.** Showing mercy to others, generous. **Good deeds,** which praise God. See *James 1:27; Matt. 5:16*. **Free from.** Prejudice and hypocrisy go together. One who has the *true wisdom* will be free from such things! See *1 Pet. 1:22*.

18. **And goodness.** Goodness = righteousness. The Greek-speaking Jews put great emphasis on the ethical side of religion, and were very proud of their relationship to God. **Goodness** is the goal here, and it *grows out of* the seeds the peacemakers plant in peace. See what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:9*. If *goodness* is the harvest, then *goodness* must have been the seeds which the peacemakers planted in peace. Goodness and peace go together.

1. **Where do?** "What is the source of all the fights and quarrels which take place both among you Christians and against the non-Christians?" **They come from.** The crimes which James condemns were so horrible and done so openly, that we can hardly believe Christians would be guilty of such behavior! Yet human nature being what it is, and Christian growth being necessary, we must accept the

for pleasure, which are constantly fighting within your bodies. ²You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill; you strongly desire things, but you cannot get them, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it. ³And when you ask you do not receive it, because your motives are bad; you ask for things to use for your own pleasures. ⁴Unfaithful people! Don't you know that to be the world's friend means to be God's enemy? Whoever wants to be the world's friend makes himself God's enemy. ⁵Do not think that the scripture means nothing that says, "The spirit that God placed in us is filled

Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in

fact. Compare *1 Cor. 3:1-3*. "The church is a hospital for sinners, not a rest home for saints." We as Christians must cooperate with God by actively resisting our human nature and making a positive effort to live both holy and good lives. See *Rom. 8:12-13; 12:1-2*. **Your desires for pleasure.** The TEV gives the literal translation. These desires include: pride, greed, lust, and grandiose ambition. Compare *Rom 7:23; 1 Pet. 2:11*.

2. You want things. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "It must be confessed that these verses are very difficult to understand." Yet I think *MacKnight* gives the key by viewing James as a unity. He says: "Next he told them, they never could succeed in converting the heathens, and destroying idolatry, because they did not use the methods proper for these ends (results). They neither prayed to God for assistance and success, nor exercised (used) meekness towards those whom they wished to convert." The Jews still expected an earthly version of Messiah's Kingdom, and they thought it would come by converting Gentiles to Judaism. Even many Christian Jews still thought this, and they expected to be able to live their lives wallowing in sensual pleasure when Messiah's Kingdom came!! The paradox is their mixed attitude, wanting to bring the Gentiles to Christ, but also to the Law of Moses. Rather than asking God's guidance, they used ranting and raving, quarreling and fighting, to try to make converts, and were ready to kill when they failed to succeed!!!

3. Because your motives are bad. "Even when you do ask God for success, you do not receive it, because you ask God to bless your wicked and unspiritual efforts, rather than changing your methods to match his instructions!" Their motivation in wanting to make converts, was not to bring God glory; but to get money from these converts to spend on their own pleasures. Compare *1 Tim. 6:5; Titus 1:11*.

4. Unfaithful people! "As an adulterous wife is unfaithful to her husband, so your spiritual adultery is unfaithful to your God!" Don't you know? "You gain the friendship of worldly people by sharing in their sins, but in doing this, you make yourself God's enemy!" Compare *John 15:18-20*.

5. Do not think. Verse 6 shows it is not the Holy Spirit, but the human spirit, which James is talking about here. "The human spirit which God placed in us is filled with fierce desires which can destroy us if we do not control them!" [This exact quotation is not found, but it is a lot like *Gal. 5:17*. *Beza* connected it with *Gen. 8:21*. Compare *Rom. 7:14-25*.]

with fierce desires." ⁶But the grace that God gives is even stronger. As the scripture says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

⁷So then, submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil, and he will run away from you. ⁸Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners! Cleanse your hearts, you hypocrites! ⁹Be sorrowful, cry, and weep; change your laughter into crying, your joy into gloom! ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Warning against Judging a Brother

¹¹Do not criticize one another, my brothers. Whoever criticizes his brother, or judges him, criticizes the Law and judges it. If you judge the Law, then you are no longer one who obeys the

us tends toward envy, but he gives us more grace? That is why Scripture says;

"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother, or judges him, speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sit-

6. **But the grace.** "God gives us the grace to overcome our human spirit! And God shows us a better way of making converts to Christ!" **God resists the proud.** *Prov. 3:34.* "God makes the schemes of the proud fail, and frustrates their desires." **But gives grace.** "God helps the humble to succeed!" Compare *Matt. 5:1-13.*

7. **So then.** "Submit yourselves to God, especially when you try to convert the pagans!" **Resist the Devil,** who by filling you with pride and anger, seduces you to use unholy methods to spread your religion." **And he.** *Benson* says: "We may chase away the Devil, not by holy water, the sign of the cross, or any superstitious charm, but by steady virtue and resolute goodness."

8. **Come near to God.** "Worship God with your life, with a deep sense of his holiness and justice, deal with others as he deals with you, and he will bless and assist you in your efforts to serve him!" *Johnson* says: "If we wish God very near to us we must seek to dwell very near to him." **Wash your hands.** Some of these Jews were "Zealots." See note on *Mark 15:7.* "Before you can worship God, you must make yourself pure from crimes of violence and unholy methods, which you have been using." **Cleanse your hearts.** "You must get rid of those evil desires and bad motives which make you act in such contradictory ways!" See *James 3:9-12.*

9. **Be sorrowful!** These words show the contrast between the vulgar gaiety of the pleasure-seeker, and the humility of the one who has turned away from sin and turned to God. *Joel 2:12-13.* [This does not mean that a Christian must go around with a long face! See *1 Thess. 5:16* and note.]

10. **Humble yourselves.** See *Matt. 23:12* and note.

11. **Do not criticize.** "Do not slander each other because of your opinions in religion." **Whoever.** "In criticizing and judging your brother in matters of conscience (*Rom. 14:1-4*), you are opposing the Law of both Moses and Christ, which does not permit such things." **If you judge the Law.** *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "When a man misinterprets the Law, and then acted upon that misinterpretation, and denounced others who did not do likewise, then he was truly not a doer of the Law, but a judge, - and a very bad one too!"

Law, but one who judges it. ¹²God is the only lawgiver and judge. He alone can save and destroy. Who do you think you are, to judge your fellow-man?

Warning against Boasting

¹³Now listen to me, you that say, "Today or tomorrow we will travel to a certain city, where we will stay a year, and go into business and make a lot of money." ¹⁴You don't even know what your life tomorrow will be! You are like a thin fog, which appears for a moment and then disappears. ¹⁵What you should say is this, "If the Lord is willing, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶But now you are proud, and you boast; all such boasting is wrong.

¹⁷So then, the person who does not do the good he knows he should do is guilty of sin.

Warning to the Rich

5 And now, you rich people, listen to me! Weep and wail over the miseries that are

ting in judgment on it. There ¹² is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

Boasting About Tomorrow

Now listen, you who say, ¹³ "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know ¹⁴ what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ Any one, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

Warning to Rich Oppressors

5 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is

12. **God is the only lawgiver and judge.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The words are intended to show the arrogant impertinence of those who were judging their neighbors on a misinterpretation of the Law." *Taylor* says: "Give every man the benefit of the doubt."

13. **Now listen to me.** "You act as though everything were yours to decide, and that God had nothing to do with the events of the world!"

14. **You don't even know.** "You speak confidently of the future, but you don't even know for sure if you will even be living tomorrow!"

15. **If the Lord is willing.** "This is the proper way to plan things, because it will make you more aware of how much you depend upon God!" "*You may make your plans, but God directs your actions*" (*Prov. 16:9*). See *Heb. 6:3* and note.

16. **But now.** "You are proud of your words and you boast about the future as if you were completely independent from God. All such boasting is wrong, because it shows you are ignorant both about yourselves and about God!"

17. **So then.** "If you know what is right and good and fail to do it, this makes you guilty of sin. Your guilt is even greater, because you *knew better*, yet did not do it!" This proves there are *sins of omission*.

1. **You rich people.** *MacKnight* thinks James is speaking to the unbelieving Jews who opposed the gospel. It can be applied to all who become rich by cheating and oppressing the poor. The Jewish wars and the destruction of Jerusalem were to make drastic changes in the fortunes of the Jews!!! God has a "pay day" for all, and sin will not go unpunished. We see this same thought in *Rev. ch 16*. See notes there.

coming upon you! ²Your riches have rotted away, and your clothes have been eaten by moths. ³Your gold and silver are covered with rust, and this rust will be a witness against you, and eat up your flesh like fire. You have piled up riches in these last days. ⁴You have not paid the wages to the men who work in your fields. Hear their complaints! The cries of those who gather in your crops have reached the ears of God, the Lord Almighty. ⁵Your life here on earth has been full of luxury and pleasure. You have made yourselves fat for the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the innocent man, and he does not resist you.

Patience and Prayer

⁷Be patient, then, my brothers, until the Lord comes. See how the farmer is patient as he waits for his land to produce precious crops. He waits

coming upon you. Your ² wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are cor- ³ roded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last ⁴ days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord ⁵ All-powerful. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fat- ⁶ tened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have con- demned and murdered inno- cent men, who were not op- posing you.

Patience in Suffering

⁷ Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the

2. **Have rotted away.** Much of their wealth was in perishable foodstuffs. See note on *Matt. 24:21*. **Your clothes.** Much wealth was also in the form of clothes, rugs, tapestries, etc.

3. **Your gold and silver.** They rust (tarnish) because they have been stored away so long. This shows they have been hoarded. Hoarded wealth, gotten by cheating the poor, will be a curse to the one who hoards it. See the Parable of the Shrewd Manager (*Luke 16:1-13* and notes). See note on *verse 1*.

4. **You have not paid.** "You made your wealth by not paying your workers, and have disobeyed God's Law (*Lev. 19:13*). He hears their cries! Will He not punish you???"

5. **Your life here on earth.** "You have lived in luxury and opulence by cheating others. You have had the pleasure, and they have had the hardships! But you have prepared your own doom!" See what Jesus predicted in *Matt. 23:34-39* and notes there. See also *1 Thess. 2:14-16* and notes.

6. **You have.** The "Zealots" (note on *Mark 15:7*) especially, killed with no feeling of guilt. The climax of their sin was the murder of the *Innocent Man*, Christ Jesus. Compare *Acts 7:52*. [Both Jew and Gentile were involved in the death of Christ, but see *Matt. 23:34-36; 27:25* and notes.]

7. **Be patient, then.** "You who are being persecuted as He was, learn from His example and be patient." **Until the Lord comes.** I think James is pointing to the destruction of Jerusalem, not the Second Coming. See *Matt. 24:29-31* and notes. For us who live today, these words of James point to the Second Coming! **See how the farmer.** Time is essential! It requires time for a crop to grow and mature so it can be harvested. Some who harshly treated their fellow-man and opposed the Good News would change. Enough time must pass, so that God's purpose could be completed. Compare *Rev. 6:9-11* and notes.

patiently for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Keep your hopes high, for the day of the Lord's coming is near.

⁹Do not complain against one another, my brothers, so that God will not judge you. The Judge is near, ready to come in. ¹⁰My brothers, remember the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Take them as examples of patient endurance under suffering. ¹¹We call them happy because they endured. You have heard of Job's patience, and you know how the Lord provided for him in the end. For the Lord is full of mercy and compassion.

¹²Above all, my brothers, do not use an oath when you make a promise; do not swear by heaven, or by earth, or by anything else. Say only "Yes" when you mean yes, and "No" when you mean no, so that you will not come under God's judgment.

¹³Is anyone among you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? He should sing praises.

fail and spring rains. You ⁸too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

Brothers, as an example ¹⁰of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we ¹¹consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Above all, my brothers, do ¹²not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

The Prayer of Faith

Is any one of you in ¹³trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing

8. **You also.** "You must follow the example of the farmer and wait patiently!" **Keep your hopes high.** "The Lord will soon relieve your suffering by destroying those who persecute you and oppose the gospel!" Compare 2 *Tim.* 4:18 and note. **For the day.** See note on verse 7.

9. **Do not complain.** This begins a new thought. "I told you about the quick destruction of those who persecute you to give you hope, but do not let this make you resentful against them." **So that God.** See *Matt.* 7:1-2 and notes. **The Judge is near.** See *Matt.* 24:33 and note. The Jewish *Mishna* says: "This world is as if it were a vestibule to the future world; prepare thyself in the vestibule, that thou mayest enter the reception-room."

10. **Remember the prophets.** Compare *Acts* 7:51-53 and notes.

11. **We call them happy.** See *Matt.* 5:11-12; 3 *John* 3-5 and notes. **Job's patience.** Job was a real person and his life-story teaches us a great lesson about being patient. **For the Lord.** "He is full of mercy and compassion, even when he permits suffering to come to us!" Compare *Heb.* 12:5-13 and notes.

12. **Do not use an oath.** Jesus said this same thing in *Matt.* 5:33-37 and notes there. Our modern sin of *profanity* grew out of the habit of using an oath (vow) to affirm a promise. Since Jews believed some oaths were binding, but others were not, *MacKnight* thinks some were falsely swearing an oath and denying they were Christians to avoid persecution. They would do this with their "fingers crossed," expecting God not to hold them to it.

13. **In trouble?** "Are you suffering because you are a Christian? Then don't try to escape it by swearing an oath falsely." **He should pray.** "When in trouble, ask God for strength! Ask him for *wisdom* (*James* 1:5)! He will help you in the right way (*Rom.* 8:28)!" **Happy?** "Christians show their happiness by singing praise to God!" Compare *Acts* 16:25; *Eph.* 5:18-19.

¹⁴Is there anyone who is sick? He should call the church elders, who will pray for him and rub oil on him in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵This prayer, made in faith, will heal the sick man; the Lord will restore him to health, and the sins he has committed will be forgiven. ¹⁶So then, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you will be healed. The prayer of a good man has a powerful effect. ¹⁷Elijah was the same kind of person that we are. He prayed earnestly that there would be no rain, and no rain fell on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸Once again he prayed, and the sky poured out its rain and the earth produced its crops.

¹⁹My brothers! If one of you wanders away from the truth, and another one brings him back again, ²⁰remember this: whoever turns a sinner back from his wrong way will save that sinner's soul from death, and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

songs of praise. Is any one of 14
you sick? He should call the
elders of the church to pray
over him and anoint him
with oil in the name of the
Lord. And the prayer offered 15
in faith will make the sick
person well; the Lord will
raise him up. If he has sinned,
he will be forgiven.
Therefore, confess your sins 16
to each other and pray for
each other so that you may
be healed. The prayer of a
righteous man is powerful
and effective.

Elijah was a man just like 17
us. He prayed earnestly that
it would not rain, and it did
not rain on the land for three
and a half years. Again he 18
prayed, and the heavens gave
rain, and the earth produced
its crops.

My brothers, if one of you 19
should wander from the
truth and someone should
bring him back, remember 20
this: Whoever turns a sinner
away from his error will save
him from death and cover
many sins.

14. **Who is sick.** In most of the churches begun by the apostles, some one of the church elders would have the *gift from the Spirit* to heal the sick. Oil was a symbol of the Holy Spirit. See *Mark 6:13* and note.

15. **Made in faith.** The faith was *IN* the church elders *who prayed* for the man. Compare *Matt. 17:19-20*; *1 John 5:16* and notes. **And the sins.** In general, disease is not *SENT* as a punishment for sin (see *Luke 13:1-5*; *John 9:2-3*), but sometimes it may have been, especially in the first century (*1 Cor. 11:30*) [Jewish theology said: "No death without sin, no chastisement without evil-doing." But compare this with *Heb. 12:5-13*.]

16. **So then.** *MacKnight* thinks this should be taken literally. There can be no doubt that hate, bitterness, etc., impede recovery from sickness. We can set our consciences at ease by confessing our sins to one another (even though only God forgives sin) and restore broken relationships. **The prayer of a good man.** [*Man* is not in the Greek here, but may be implied.] *MacKnight* sees this as the *inspired prayer* of a church elder who has the gift of faith (*1 Cor. 12:9*). But we can certainly take this as a general statement about the *power of prayer*!

17. **The same kind of person.** Elijah was as human as any of us! What he did was an example of the power of prayer. *1 Kings 17:1*. **He prayed earnestly.** This is something we may all do, since every *child of God* has that right. **No rain fell.** This was God's visible answer to his prayer. [But God does not always give a visible answer, at least not in the form which we expect. See *Acts 28:16* and note.]

18. **Once again.** This was a second example. Elijah plays a large part in later Jewish literature.

19. **My brothers!** See note on *James 1:2*. **Wanders away.** "You must try to help each other! If one of you wanders away from the truth, you must try to bring him back again! (*Gal. 6:1*.)"

20. **Remember this.** "To show you how important it really is for you to help each other, I tell you this. Whoever brings a sinner back from his wrong way will save that sinner's soul from spiritual (and eternal) death! And this will also bring about the forgiveness of many sins, which can only be forgiven if the sinner turns back to God (that is, repents). (*Psalms 32:1*.)" Compare this **WORK OF LOVE** with *1 Pet. 4:8* and note. This is a special honor, as *Dan. 12:3* shows!

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST LETTER FROM PETER

Simon Peter is the best known of the Twelve. He was a native of Bethsaida (*John 1:44*) and had a home in Capernaum (*Mark 1:29*). He had a large and successful fishing business on Lake Galilee (*Luke 5:1-11*) when Jesus called him to be an apostle. From then on Peter's life was close to Jesus, and he along with James, John, and Andrew, formed the *inner circle* of Jesus' disciples. It was Peter who first declared Jesus is the Messiah (*Matt. 16:16*). Jesus changed his name from Simon to Peter (Greek for a rock) or Cephas (Aramaic for a rock). Compare note on *Matt. 16:18*. He is the first to publicly proclaim the Good News on Pentecost (*Acts ch 2*), and is the leader in the activities of the first years of Christian history. But Peter disappears in *Acts 12:17* and appears briefly in *Gal. 2:11* and *1 Cor. 1:12*. These two letters imply that he visited among the churches of the province of Asia. He took his wife along on his tours (*1 Cor. 9:5*). There is no evidence that he spent his last twenty-five years at Rome, as some claim. But there is proof that he died at Rome, about the same time that Paul did, in 67 or 68 A.D. Tradition says he was crucified upside-down.

First Peter has probably the most complete synopsis of the teaching and ethics of the Good News of any New Testament Letter. Christian living is linked with the example of Jesus, and great emphasis is put on the need to live a holy life! In the first century, as the number of Christians rapidly increased, so did persecution. Compare *Rev. 6:2-6* and notes. Peter writes to encourage those who suffer. *Erasmus* said about this Letter: "It is worthy of the Prince of the apostles, and full of apostolic dignity and authority. It is *sparing in words, but full of sense.*" Peter probably writes from Babylon on the Euphrates (*1 Pet. 5:13*). Some think Babylon is being used as a code-name for Rome, but no evidence places Peter in Rome at this date. *Johnson* says: "There are reasons for thinking that Peter has seen the Ephesian Letter, one of the epistles of Paul's (first) imprisonment, and so this Epistle was probably written as late, at least, as 63 A.D."

THE FIRST LETTER FROM PETER

1 From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ—
To God's chosen people who live as refugees scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. ²You were chosen according to the purpose of God the Father, and were made a holy people by his Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be cleansed by his blood.

May grace and peace be yours in full measure.

A Living Hope

³Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy, he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from the dead. This fills us with a living hope, and so we look forward to possess the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. He keeps them for you in heaven, where they cannot decay

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Praise to God for a Living Hope

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept

1. **From Peter, an apostle.** Peter does not claim authority higher than the other apostles. **To God's chosen people.** See *Rom. 8:29-30* and notes. **Refugees scattered.** DIASPORA originally meant the Jews who were scattered all over the world in Gentile nations. But it soon came to be used of Christians in general, both Jew and Gentile. Christians are refugees, from another world (*Phil. 3:20*). The Letter is addressed to five Roman provinces where Paul had preached the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free.

2. **According to the purpose.** The plan which God had already decided on, was to save men and women through the Good News! See *Col. 1:20; Acts 2:23* and notes. **Were made a holy people.** This looks from God's side. Compare *Titus 3:5*. **To obey Jesus Christ.** This looks from man's side. *We reach out* through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make ourselves part of it! See notes on *Acts 2:38, 40*. **And be cleansed.** See *Heb. 12:24*.

3. **Let us give thanks.** We thank God and praise him for his love which is the basis of what he has done for us!!! **He gave us new life.** God's act in Christ is to change us!!! **By raising Jesus Christ.** See *1 Pet. 3:21* and note. [Some think Peter is talking about the *living hope* that filled the apostles when they learned Jesus had raised from death.]

4. **We look forward.** Our living hope is not merely of eternal existence, but we become sons and daughters of God, and will share in everything God keeps for his people! **In heaven.** "This is better than any earthly wealth, because it is in heaven where it remains safe!"

or spoil or fade away. ⁵They are for you, who through faith are kept safe by God's power for the salvation which is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

⁶Be glad about this, even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer. ⁷Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire; and so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, that it may endure. Then you will receive praise and glory and honor on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸You love him, although you have not seen him. You believe in him, although you do not now see him. And so you rejoice with a great and glorious joy, which words cannot express, ⁹because you are receiving the purpose of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰It was concerning this salvation that the prophets made careful search and investigation; and they prophesied about this gift that God

in heaven for you. Through ⁵ faith you are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly ⁶ rejoice, though now for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so ⁷ that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though ⁸ you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are ⁹ receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, ¹⁰ the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and

5. **Who through faith are kept safe.** See 1 Pet. 5:7; 1 John 5:4-5. God's power is available to the Christian through faith! **Revealed.** 1 John 3:1-3.

6. **Be glad.** In this hope you have as a Christian! **Even though.** "You will be faced with persecution in different forms and many problems because of your relationship to Christ." See John 16:33.

7. **Their purpose is to prove.** "There is a reason why God allows these things to happen to you. They are to prove that your faith is genuine. All false believers will be *weeded out* by the many kinds of trials." **Even gold.** "Gold, which is so precious to men, is tested and refined by fire. Your faith is much more precious than gold! Do you wonder, then, that it must be tested???" **Then you will receive.** At Christ's Second Coming, the one whose faith survives the testing, will receive his or her eternal reward. See Rev. 22:12-14.

8. **You love him.** "You have not seen Jesus Christ, nor do you see him now. But you love him and believe in him! You live by faith! **And so you rejoice.** "You have believed the witness of us apostles, and so you rejoice in Christ who is your Savior, with a great and glorious joy! **Which words cannot express.** Human language cannot describe the union with God which the Christian like Paul may enjoy (2 Cor. 12:3-4). This is the living hope which each Christian has!!

9. **Because you are receiving.** "Eternal life begins now, for those who love God!" Compare John 10:10; 1 Cor. 2:9. The Christian has past sins forgiven, and is God's child (Rom. 8:15). In this way, we are *now receiving* salvation. But some of this is still future, as we wait for our whole being to be set free by our bodies being changed (Phil. 3:20-21).

10. **It was concerning.** The prophets did not understand the symbols and words which the Spirit spoke through them. They prophesied about the Messiah and salvation, and then tried to understand the message the Spirit had given them. See 1 Cor. 2:9. God gives salvation as a *gift* through His act in Jesus Christ.

would give you. ¹¹They tried to find out when the time would be and how it would come. This was the time to which Christ's Spirit in them pointed as the Spirit predicted the sufferings that Christ would have to endure and the glory that would follow. ¹²God revealed to these prophets that their work was not for their own good, but for yours, as they spoke about those things which you have now heard from the messengers of the Good News, who announced them by the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. These are things which even the angels would like to understand.

A Call to Holy Living

¹³So then, have your minds ready for action. Keep alert, and set your hope completely on the blessing which will be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires

with the greatest care, trying 11 to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that 12 they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Be Holy

Therefore, prepare your 13 minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, 14 do not conform to the evil desires you had when you

11. **This was the time.** The prophets of the Old Testament spoke by means of the Spirit of Christ = Holy Spirit. But their message was partial, and they could only guess at how these things would come true. One of the *gifts* from the *Spirit* was the inspired ability to understand the Old Testament (*1 Cor. 12:8* and note). Those who had this gift could understand what the prophets could *not* understand, and see that the Old Testament pointed to the time when The Christ would come as a human being and suffer as our *sin offering*. Great glory would follow this event, as God's grace was made available to all!!! Compare *Luke 24:25-26; Heb. 11:39-40*.

12. **God revealed.** God showed the prophets that what they predicted pointed forward to a future time. They looked forward to a New Age (*Matt. 19:28*) which would be the *last days* (*Acts 2:16-17*) and the kingdom of God's dear Son (*Col. 1:13*). **Which you have now heard.** This is the Good News preached on Pentecost and around the world (*Col. 1:23*). **By the power of the Holy Spirit.** The apostles and prophets of Christ spoke by inspiration. See *John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:6-10; 1 Thess. 1:5*. In the Christian Age, the Holy Spirit is active in the world as never before!!! Compare *John 7:37-39; Eph. 2:22; Acts 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19-20*. **Even the angels.** Many had an exaggerated sense of the importance of angels. Here Peter shows them watching with interest as the drama of salvation unfolds! But even the angels could not understand what God was preparing to do!!! Peter's message is: *This salvation is worth living for and suffering for!!!*

13. **So then.** "Because of all these things I remind you about, hold firm to what you have in Christ!" **Ready for action.** These people wore long flowing robes. When they prepared for action, they pulled their robes up and fastened them with a belt, to keep from being *tripped up*. Peter's symbolism says: "Get it all together and be ready to move out!" Peter speaks of four attitudes in the next verses: keep alert (*verse 13*); be holy (*verse 15*); be reverent (*verse 17*); love one another (*verse 22*).

14. **Be obedient.** "Your sense of being God's child will cause you to turn away from the things you did in your ignorance!"

you had when you were still ignorant. ¹⁵Instead, be holy in all that you do, just as God who called you is holy. ¹⁶The scripture says, "You must be holy, because I am holy."

¹⁷You call him Father, when you pray to God, who judges all men by the same standard, according to what each one has done; so then, spend the rest of your lives here on earth in reverence for him. ¹⁸For you know what was paid to set you free from the worthless manner of life you received from your ancestors. It was not something that loses its value, such as silver or gold; ¹⁹you were set free by the costly sacrifice of Christ, who was like a lamb without defect or spot. ²⁰He had been chosen by God before the creation of the world, and was revealed in these last days for your sake. ²¹Through him you believe in God, who raised him from death and gave him glory; and so your faith and hope are fixed on God.

lived in ignorance. But just ¹⁵ as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it ¹⁶ is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Since you call on a Father ¹⁷ who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it ¹⁸ was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious ¹⁹ blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the crea- ²⁰ tion of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through ²¹ him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

15. **Instead, be holy.** "Supersede evil desires with holy living! God your Father is holy, and you must be like him!"

16. **The scripture says.** "Moses, whom some of the false teachers claim to honor, wrote the same thing in *Lev. 19:2*." [Peter did not quote chapter and verse divisions, since they originated in the sixteenth century.]

17. **You call him Father.** Compare *Jer. 3:19*. "You worship the God of the Universe, and you call him Father! He judges men by the same standard, whether they are Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, free or slave, man or woman!" **In reverence for him.** "If God is your Father, then heaven is your home, and you are a refugee here in this world! You must live the rest of your life in reverence for Him!"

18. **What was paid.** "It cost something to *buy you for God!* And you know it was not material things like silver or gold." **Worthless manner of life.** See note on *1 Thess. 1:9*.

19. **By the costly sacrifice of Christ.** BLOOD = BLOODY DEATH = COSTLY SACRIFICE. "You see the value which God placed on you, by the costly sacrifice which He paid to buy you for Himself!" **Like a lamb.** The Passover lamb pointed to Christ the Lamb of God who takes away sins! God demands the best! Compare *Lev. 22:21-22*.

20. **He had been chosen.** Notice the costly sacrifice of Christ was according to God's Plan. (See *Luke 9:31* and note. **Before the creation of the world.** God chose Christ to be the costly sacrifice, even before the creation of man! **In these last days.** Jesus came at the time the Jewish Age was near its termination. As Peter writes this, Jerusalem and the Temple have perhaps seven years left in their existence.

21. **Through him.** Peter preaches the same gospel that Paul preaches. Both show the importance of faith in Christ! Christ is the *door* through which we may come to God! **Are fixed on God.** "Our faith and hope are fixed on the power and truth of God, which Christ revealed to us through his Spirit!"

²²Now that by your obedience to the truth you have purified yourselves and have come to have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts. ²³For through the living and eternal word of God you have been born again as the children of a parent who is immortal, not mortal. ²⁴As the scripture says,

“All men are like the wild grass,
and all their glory is like its flower.
The grass dies, and its flower falls off,
²⁵but the word of the Lord remains
forever.”

This is the word that the Good News brought to you.

The Living Stone and the Holy Nation

2 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all evil; no more lying, or hypocrisy, or jealousy, or insulting language. ³Be like newborn babies, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, with all your hearts. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For,

“All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the wild flower;
the grass withers,
and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord
stands forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your sal-

22. Now that. “You have purified yourselves by obeying the truth which is the Good News, through the influence of the Spirit.” *Johnson* says: “The Spirit is inseparable from the gospel. The gospel dispensation is that of the Spirit. See *Acts 15:8-9*.” And have come to have a sincere love. *Johnson* says: “The Spirit of Christ in our hearts is the spirit of brotherly love.” Love one another. “You must actively practice this Christian love. If you do not continually fan it into flame, it will die out!”

23: For through. “It is through God’s truth revealed in the Good News about the Kingdom (*Matt. 13:19* and note) which is the seed that grew up in your hearts (compare *Gal. 3:1-2*), that you have been born again.” The life is planted by the word of God (*Acts 10:36; James 1:18*), and birth takes place through the water and the Spirit (*John 3:5; Titus 3:5*).

24: As the scripture says. *Isa. 40:6-8* Septuagint. “Our human life, like the wild grass, doesn’t last very long at the best! But a new birth from the living and eternal word of God is a birth to eternal life!!!”

25. Remains forever. “Like its source, it is eternal and never loses its power!” This is the word. “This living and eternal word of God is the same Good News brought to you by the preaching of us apostles and all who proclaim the truth!!!”

1. Rid yourselves. “Since you are children of God, you must remove evil from your lives.” In all centuries, it is important that Christians live holy lives, so that they will not bring disgrace on the Messianic community and the Christ who is their Lord! The four types of evil which Peter names, still are common problems in day-to-day living.

2. Be like newborn babies. “As newborn babies are always thirsty and eager for milk, so you who are newborn in Christ must always be thirsty and eager for the pure spiritual milk of the Good News! As babies grow to be adults, so you will grow up, and be saved when Christ Comes!”

drinking it you may grow up and be saved. ³As the scripture says, "You have tasted the Lord's kindness."

"Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected as worthless by men, but chosen as valuable by God. ⁵Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For the scripture says,

"I chose a valuable stone,
which now I place for the cornerstone
in Zion;
and whoever believes in him will never
be disappointed."

⁷This stone is of great value for you that believe; but for those who do not believe:

"The very stone which the builders re-
jected
turned out to be the most important
stone."

vation, now that you have ³
tasted that the Lord is good.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

As you come to him, the ⁴
living Stone—rejected by
men but chosen by God and
precious to him—you also, ⁵
like living stones, are being
built into a spiritual house
to be a holy priesthood offer-
ing spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through
Jesus Christ. For in Scrip- ⁶
ture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious
cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in
him will never be
put to shame."

Now to you who believe, this ⁷
stone is precious. But to
those who do not believe:

"The stone the builders
rejected
has become the cap-
stone."

3. **For the scripture says.** Peter quotes *Psalms 34:8* Septuagint. "Your thirst for this spiritual milk will be very strong, because you have already tasted the Lord's kindness in it!" Compare *Heb. 6:4-5*.

4. **The living stone.** Compare *Rom. 9:32-33; Mark 12:10-11*. Christ is a living stone because he has life (*John 1:4*), and he gives this life to those who believe in him, and they become living stones (*verse 5*). Christ was rejected by the Jewish leaders, but chosen by God to be the rock foundation (*Matt. 16:18*) for the spiritual temple (*Eph. 2:19-22*).

5. **And let yourselves be used.** "Through the living and eternal word of God, you have been born again and have become living stones! You must let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple." Note the church is built up of living stones. **Where you will serve.** Each one who has been born again (*1 Pet. 1:23*), man or woman, is a priest to God and has direct access to God through Jesus Christ! Christians offer themselves as living sacrifices (*Rom. 12:1-2*), to praise God!

6. **For the scripture says.** *Isa. 28:16* Septuagint, paraphrased. God said long ago that Christ would be a Living Stone. Compare *Rom. 9:33*. **Cornerstone.** This was the most important part of the foundation and tied two walls together. Some see in this Christ joining Jew and Gentile into one group in himself.

7. **For you that believe.** "He is very great in value to you who believe in him, because you are honored by being built on him." See *Rev. 3:12*. **Who do not believe.** "For the unbeliever, who rejects Christ, it is the shame written in *Psalms 118:22* Septuagint."

⁸And another scripture says,
 "This is the stone that will make people
 stumble,
 the rock that will make them fall."

They stumbled because they did not believe in the word; such was God's will for them.

⁹But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you from the darkness into his own marvelous light. ¹⁰At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people; at one time you did not know God's mercy, but now you have received his mercy.

Slaves of God

¹¹I appeal to you, my friends, as strangers and refugees in this world! Do not give in to bodily passions, which are always at war against the soul.

and, 8
 "A stone that causes men
 to stumble
 and a rock that makes
 them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

But you are a chosen 9
 people, a royal priesthood, a
 holy nation, a people belong-
 ing to God, that you may de-
 clare the praises of him who
 called you out of darkness
 into his wonderful light.
 Once you were not a people, 10
 but now you are the people
 of God; once you had not re-
 ceived mercy, but now you
 have received mercy.

Dear friends, I urge you, 11
 as foreigners and strangers
 in the world, to abstain from
 sinful desires, which war a-

⁸. **Another scripture says.** *Isa. 8:14.* Christ is of great value to those who believe. But to the one who rejects Christ; he is a stone they stumble over and fall and are broken to pieces. Compare *Matt. 10:34-39; 21:44* and notes. **They stumbled.** Those who reject Christ. See *Mark 4:17.* **Such was God's will for them.** God did not decree that they would reject Christ, but he did decree that those who did reject him, would stumble and fall to their punishment.

⁹. **But you are.** "You who do believe have not stumbled or fallen against the stone. The titles of honor given to God's ancient people belong to you, both Jew and Gentile!" **The chosen race.** *Deut. 7:6.* **The King's priests.** *Exod. 19:6.* **The holy nation.** *Exod. 19:6.* **God's own people.** *Isa. 43:21* Septuagint. **Chosen to proclaim.** They honor God by proclaiming Him to the world, both in words and in actions! **Who called you.** God calls everyone through the Good News (*John 6:44-45*) into his own marvelous light (*Acts 26:18*).

¹⁰. **At one time.** "You Gentiles were once alienated and estranged from God because of your idols and your sins, and you knew nothing of God's mercy. But now through Christ, you have received God's mercy, which you share together with the Jews." Compare *Rom. 9:25; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.*

¹¹. **As strangers and refugees.** "You have no birthright here on this earth, but are only staying here temporarily as you travel to Eternity!" Compare *Heb. 11:13.* **Do not give in.** "Since you are citizens of heaven, and will be here only a short time, do not give in to your bodily passions! If you do, you will not reach your homeland!" See *Rom. 7:23;* but also *Col. 2:20-23.*

¹²Your conduct among the heathen should be so good that when they accuse you of being evil-doers they will have to recognize your good deeds, and so praise God on the Day of his coming.

¹³Submit yourselves, for the Lord's sake, to every human authority: to the Emperor, who is the supreme authority, ¹⁴and to the governors, who have been sent by him to punish the evil-doers and praise those who do good. ¹⁵For God's will is this: he wants you to silence the ignorant talk of foolish men by the good things you do. ¹⁶Live as free men; do not use your freedom, however, to cover up any evil, but live as God's slaves. ¹⁷Respect all men, love your fellow believers, fear God, and respect the Emperor.

against your soul. Live such 12
good lives among the pagans
that, though they accuse you
of doing wrong, they may see
your good deeds and glorify
God on the day he visits us.

Submission to Rulers and Masters

Submit yourselves for the 13
Lord's sake to every author-
ity instituted among men:
whether to the king, as the
supreme authority, or to gov- 14
ernors, who are sent by him
to punish those who do
wrong and to commend those
who do right. For it is God's 15
will that by doing good you
should silence the ignorant
talk of foolish men. Live as 16
free men, but do not use your
freedom as a cover-up for
evil; live as servants of God.
Show proper respect to ev- 17
eryone: Love the brother-
hood of believers, fear God,
honor the king.

12. **Should be so good.** "Many lies and wild stories will be told about you by the unbelievers. Make sure that your conduct is so good and so ethical, that these charges are proved to be false, and they come to respect your good deeds. Your conduct may win them to Christ, and then they will praise God on the Day of his coming!" [*MacKnight* understands the Day to be a time of great persecution (see *Isa. 10:3*). The Christian's conduct during times of calamity and crisis has much influence on unbelievers.]

13. **To every human authority.** "You must not be like some who despise the government authorities. It is the Lord's will that you obey the government and be a good citizen (*Rom. 13:1-8*)."
To the Emperor. Nero was Emperor as Peter writes this.

14. **And to the governors.** "This means that Christians in every country are to obey the laws of these countries in everything not sinful or contrary to God's command (*Acts 4:19; 5:29*), without considering whether the religion of the governors and of the country are true or false." It is a paradox that the same government can serve both God and Satan at the same time (see note on *Rev. 13:2*).

15. **For God's will is this.** "I assure you that it is God's will that you submit yourselves to human authority. By doing this you will be able to silence those ignorant men who insult and slander you, and who say you intend to destroy the government."

16. **Live as free men.** *MacKnight* says: "The Jews boasted in their having been at all times freemen; that is, in having been always governed by their own laws, *John 8:33*. In this sense, the precept *live as freemen*, means, live according to the rules of your religion, free from complying with the established idolatry." **To cover up.** "Don't use your freedom as an excuse to *cover up* your rebellion against the government!" **As God's slaves.** "God bought you with the costly sacrifice of Christ! But the fact you belong to Him ought to make you the best citizen of all in everything not contrary to the spirit and the letter of God's word!"

17. **Respect all men.** "Every human being ought to receive your respect! Love your fellow believers in Christ just as Christ loved you! Fear (reverence) God and respect the Emperor. You can do both, as Jesus showed (*Matt. 22:21*).

The Example of Christ's Suffering

¹⁸You servants must submit yourselves to your masters and show them complete respect, not only to those who are kind and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹God will bless you for this, if you endure the pain of undeserved suffering because you are conscious of his will. ²⁰For what credit is there if you endure the beatings you deserve for having done wrong? But if you endure suffering even when you have done right, God will bless you for it. ²¹It was to this that God called you; because Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin; no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. ²³When he was insulted he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered he did not threaten, but placed his hopes in God, the right-

Slaves, submit yourselves 18
to your masters with all re-
spect, not only to those who
are good and considerate,
but also to those who are
harsh. For it is commend- 19
able if a man bears up under
the pain of unjust suffering
because he is conscious of
God. But how is it to your
credit if you receive a beat- 20
ing for doing wrong and en-
dure it? But if you suffer for
doing good and you endure
it, this is commendable be-
fore God. To this you were 21
called, because Christ suffer-
ed for you, leaving you an
example, that you should fol-
low in his steps.

"He committed no sin, 22
and no deceit was found
in his mouth."

When they hurled their in- 23
sults at him, he did not re-
taliate; when he suffered, he
made no threats. Instead, he
entrusted himself to him who

18. **You servants.** This includes both servants and slaves. Christianity did not change social status, and a servant was still a servant. As a Christian servant, each was to do their best, not only for a good master, but also for one who was harsh! See *Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-24*. [But Christian principles eventually destroyed slavery.]

19. **God will bless you for this.** The Christian who does what Peter says, has God's blessing on his action. If his conscience, taught by God's word, leads him to suffer even though he does not deserve this, and he bears it patiently because of his love for God, he will be blessed by it.

20. **For what credit?** "If you do wrong, and are caught and punished for it, you only get what you deserve! There is no credit in this!" **But if you endure.** Some were *harsh* to try to discourage the Christian faith of their servant! To be patient under such circumstances, pleased God.

21. **It was to this.** "It is part of being a Christian to suffer for doing good!" **Christ himself.** "Christ-on-the-cross is our example! If the sinless Christ would suffer for our sins, surely we can endure undeserved suffering, however wrong it may seem to us, because we are not sinless as He is!"

22. **He committed no sin.** Note the emphasis on the sinlessness of Christ. Peter uses the same language as *Isa. 53:9* Septuagint. Compare *1 Pet. 1:19*.

23. **He did not answer back.** "Christ was insulted by the Jewish leaders, but he did not answer them back with an insult!" **He did not threaten.** "When he suffered crucifixion, he did not threaten, even though he could have destroyed his persecutors!" **But placed his hopes in God.** "He did not take revenge, but turned the whole matter over to God, and forgave his murderers."

eous Judge. ²⁴Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵You were like sheep that had lost their way; but now you have been brought back to follow the Shepherd and Keeper of your souls.

judges justly. He himself ²⁴bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you ²⁵were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Wives and Husbands

3 In the same way you wives must submit yourselves to your husbands, so that if some of them do not believe God's word, they will be won over to believe by your conduct. It will not be necessary for you to say a word, ²because they will see how pure and reverent your conduct is. ³You should not use outward aids to make yourselves beautiful, such as the way you fix your hair, or the jewelry you put on, or the dresses

Wives and Husbands

3 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without talk by the behavior of their wives, when they see ²the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty ³should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine

24. Carried our sins. "He who had no sin, took our sins in his body to the cross!" See *2 Cor. 5:21. Die to sin. Rom. 6:1-7.* In this we escape from the power and punishment of sin through God's act in Christ. **Live for righteousness.** "We have been set free so that we can make ourselves a living sacrifice in praise and honor to God!" **By his wounds. *Isa. 53:5-6.* "It is through Christ's doing and dying that we are accepted as righteous by God!"**

25. You were like sheep. "Sin had made you lose your way, just like sheep do, and you were in danger of being lost completely, or killed by wild animals!" **But now.** "God acted in Christ to set you free! By coming to him you have been brought back!" **To follow.** "Christ, who is the Shepherd and Keeper of your souls, will direct you and defend you, as you follow him!" This shows the obligation of every believer in Christ to imitate the example of Christ's spirit and willingness to suffer.

1. In the same way. "As I have instructed servants to submit to their masters." **You wives.** Some think Peter assumes his readers have already seen Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. Compare *Eph. 5:21-24; 1 Cor. 7:13-15.* Since women had been treated as slaves or at least *second class citizens*, they saw the *freedom in Christ as being let out of jail!* This is one reason why it was necessary to write certain things to them, and tell them not to **ABUSE** their freedom! **So that.** "If your husband is an unbeliever, you may win him by your conduct as you live a sweet, Christian life of peace." **For you to saw a word.** "You cannot *argue* your husband into the Kingdom, but you may *live* him into it!" *Ben Sira* said: "A silent woman is the gift of the Lord . . . a loud crying woman and a scold shall be sought out to drive away enemies."

2. They will see. "Actions often speak louder than words!"

3. You should not use. Peter's meaning is: "No amount of ostentatious display can substitute for a gracious Christian personality!" In the Bible, modesty always has to do with "overdressing to the point of being absurd." If what Peter says were taken *literally*, it would forbid wearing any clothes at all! But the woman who spends her time on the outward aids will not secure her husband's love as much as she will with a pure and reverent life. Compare *1 Tim. 2:9-10; Isa. 3:17-23.*

you wear. ⁴Instead, your beauty should consist of your true inner self, the ageless beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of the greatest value in God's sight. ⁵For the devout women of the past, who hoped in God, used to make themselves beautiful in this way, by submitting themselves to their husbands. ⁶Sarah was like that; she obeyed Abraham and called him "My master." You are now her daughters if you do good and are not afraid of anything.

⁷You husbands, also, in living with your wives you must recognize that they are the weaker sex. So you must treat them with respect, because they also will receive, together with you, God's gift of life. Do this so that nothing will interfere with your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Right

⁸To conclude: you must all have the same thoughts and the same feelings; love one another as brothers, and be kind and humble with one

clothes. Instead, it should be ⁴that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like ⁶Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Good

Finally, all of you, live in ⁸harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate

4. **Your beauty should consist.** "Develop a radiant personality! This is the true ageless beauty! It shines out of a gentle and quiet spirit, not one that is loud and quarrelsome! God will not be impressed with your *display*, but he will value your gentle and quiet spirit!"

5. **For the devout woman.** "Those devout women of the past whose names are in the Scripture made themselves beautiful in this way!"

6. **Sarah was like that.** "There is no disgrace or shame in submitting to your husband! Jewish women think of Sarah as *the example* of a good wife. See how she did! Even if you are married to an unbeliever who objects to your new life in Christ, you must still respect him and submit to him in everything (but of course stand firm in the faith)." It seems to be especially easy for a wife to despise her husband. See *Eph. 5:22-23* and notes. **Her daughters.** As Abraham is the father of the faithful, so Sarah is the mother of all Christian women, who should imitate her example. **If you do good.** Submit to your husbands. **And are not afraid.** "Fearlessness is part of the Christian Character. Do not allow your husband or pagan society to frighten you into acting contrary to our Christian religion!"

7. **You husbands, also.** "Before becoming a Christian, you may have treated your wife as a slave. Do not do this!" **Weaker sex.** Peter does not mean weaker in intelligence or moral character, but weaker in physical strength. This fact made her a second class citizen in the eyes of some. But in Christ's church there is neither class, sex, nor social status! See *Gal. 3:28*. **Because** "Your wife is your *companion-counterpart* (see note on *Matt. 19:5*). As a Christian, she also shares God's gift of life!" **Interfere.** "Family quarrels make it impossible to join in prayer, and often make the prayers of either impossible!"

8. **To conclude.** "I have been telling you how to manage your affairs as a religious society." **You must all.** "You must have a sense of being ONE in Christ! **As brothers.** "Treat each other as members of the same family!" **Be kind and humble.** "Don't quarrel and fight! Instead work for the good of each other!"

another. ⁹Do not pay back evil with evil, or cursing; instead pay back with a blessing, because a blessing is what God promised to give you when he called you. ¹⁰As the scripture says,

“Whoever wants to enjoy life and wishes to see good times, must keep from speaking evil and stop telling lies.

¹¹He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

¹²For the Lord keeps his eyes on the righteous and always listens to their prayers; but he turns against those who do evil.”

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for doing what is right, how happy you are! Do not be afraid of men, and do not worry. ¹⁵But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and make him your Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you

and humble. Do not repay ⁹ evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, ¹⁰

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.

He must turn from evil ¹¹ and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

For the eyes of the Lord ¹² are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Who is going to harm you ¹³ if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts ¹⁵ acknowledge Christ as the holy Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope

9. **Do not pay back.** “Do not take revenge!” **Instead.** “Pay back evil with good, as Christ taught (*Matt. 5:38-42*)! In this way you will help to prevent quarrels and fighting!” **Because a blessing.** “God promised you a blessing! But he will treat you just as you treat others!”

10. **As the scripture says.** Peter paraphrases *Psalms 34:12-16* Septuagint. “David also said it was necessary to live this way, to reach that eternal country!” **Must.** See *1 Pet. 2:1* and note.

11. **And do good.** “It is not enough to just turn away from evil. You must actively make a habit of doing good!” Compare *Matt. 12:43-45* and notes.

12. **For the Lord.** “When you actively make a habit of doing good, you keep yourself in God’s fellowship! He watches over you and hears your prayers!” **But he turns.** “If you do evil, he will turn away from you!”

13. **Who will harm you?** “As a general rule, we *reap what we sow*. If you are eager to do good to those who wrong you and forgive even those who will not thank you for it, others will treat you this way also!”

14. **But even.** “You may have to suffer for Christ. The hate of evil men may force this upon you. If so, *be happy!*” Compare *James 1:2-4* and notes. Peter is saying that God will bless you in this. Compare also *Heb. 12:5-13*. **Do not be afraid.** See *Luke 12:4-5*. **Do not worry.** See *Matt. 6:34*.

15. **But have reverence.** Peter expects persecution to intensify, and wants Christians to prepare themselves for it. If a Christian is to stand firm, he must have reverence for Christ in his heart and he is to submit to whatever suffering comes his way, recognizing that Christ is Lord! **Be ready.** “Christians expect an eternal life of happiness in the body, after death. Be ready to tell others who ask about this. But do not be proud or boastful, or threaten them when you do it.”

have in you. ¹⁶But do it with gentleness and respect. Keep your conscience clear, so that when you are insulted, those who speak evil of your good conduct as followers of Christ will be made ashamed of what they say. ¹⁷Because it is better to suffer for doing good, if this should be God's will, than for doing wrong. ¹⁸For Christ himself died for you; once and for all he died for sins, a good man for bad men, in order to lead you to God. He was put to death physically, but made alive spiritually, ¹⁹and in his spiritual existence he went and preached to the imprisoned spirits. ²⁰These were the spirits of those who had not obeyed God, when he waited patiently during the days that Noah was building the ark. The few people in the ark—eight in all—were saved

that you have. But do this ¹⁶with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is ¹⁷better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ ¹⁸died for your sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom ¹⁹also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who ²⁰disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were

16. **But do it.** "Whether you are asked to explain your hope by some person or a court of law, do it with gentleness and respect! By doing this, those who accuse Christians of evil conduct will be made ashamed of the things they say against you."

17. **Because it is better.** Compare *1 Pet. 2:20* and note. **God's will.** *MacKnight* says: "The apostle adds this to show that the wicked can do no evil to believers but by the permission of God." Compare *Job 1:6-12; 1 Cor. 10:13*.

18. **For Christ himself.** "Some are saying that our suffering proves that our cause is bad, and that God is displeased with us. This is not true, as you can see from the fact that Christ himself died for us!" **Once and for all.** Peter emphasized the *completeness* of God's work in Christ. **A good man for bad men.** "He is an example of one who suffered for doing good!" **In order.** "He did this so that by means of his *sin-offering*, he might lead you to God." **Physically.** "As the Logos in human form, he died physically, just as all men do!" **Spiritually.** *Johnson* says: "Having life in himself, as soon as the body failed through weakness, the power of the indestructible life began to show itself." Christ *actually* died physically, Christ was *actually* made alive spiritually (and his body raised from death). He is both the example and the guarantee of our resurrection! In raising Christ from death, God showed his approval of Christ's act of dying for the sins of the world!!!

19. **And in.** "In his spiritual existence he went and preached through Noah (*2 Pet. 2:5*) to those who are now imprisoned spirits." [Some think Jesus actually went into the world of the dead and preached the Good News to them there. But this and other views cause theological difficulties.]

20. **These were the spirits.** "These *now imprisoned* were the spirits of those who had not obeyed God, when He waited patiently for them to turn from sin during the days (120 years) that Noah was building the ark." **The few people.** "Out of all those who lived at the time of Noah, only eight were saved. They were in the ark (according to God's instructions), and the same water that destroyed the others, was the means of their salvation! This teaches us that we should not be prejudiced against the Good News when we see others rejecting it!"

by the water, ²¹which was a figure pointing to baptism, which now saves you. It is not the washing off of bodily dirt, but the promise made to God from a good conscience. It saves you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone to heaven and is at the right side of God, ruling over all angels and heavenly authorities and powers.

Changed Lives

4 Since Christ suffered physically, you too must strengthen yourselves with the same way of thinking; because whoever suffers physically is no longer involved with sin. ²From now on, then, you must live the rest of your earthly lives controlled by God's will, not by human

saved through water, and ²¹this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven ²²and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Living for God

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does ²not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of

21. **Which was a figure.** "The water of the flood itself, which held them safe in the ark, was a figure pointing to baptism which now saves you!" *Alford* (Greek Testament) says: "Water saved them, bearing up the ark; it saves us, becoming to us baptism." See *Acts 22:16* and note. Baptism is the climax to the *faith event* in which a person becomes new in Christ! [On the nature of faith, see note on *James 2:19*.] It is not. Peter says this to *by exclusion*, contrast "Christian baptism" with Jewish rituals of purification and pagan washings, and even the Flood itself (which did wash away the sin-contaminated flesh of those in Noah's day). See chart on *Acts 19:3*. **But the promise.** "The one who in good conscience comes to the water of baptism, has believed in Christ, turned away from his sins and turned to God, declared his faith in Christ, and now baptism becomes both the *point of contact* and the promise or pledge of his or her new life." **It saves you.** "Baptism saves you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from which it draws its power, and which is *acted out* in the burial in the liquid grave." Compare *Col. 2:12*; *1 Cor. 15:13-17*.

22. **Who has gone to heaven.** *Heb. 9:24*. **The right side.** *Heb. 10:12*. **Ruling.** *Heb. 1:1-3*; *1 Cor. 15:25*. The rule of Christ even over angels and heavenly authorities and powers is further proof that he is able to save his people! See *Eph. 1:20-23*.

1. **Since Christ.** "Since Christ suffered physically and died to save his people, each of you must have this same attitude! You must be willing to die for Christ, if this should be God's will for you!" See note on *1 Pet. 3:17*. **Because.** "The person who has firmly made up his mind to die rather than renounce Christ, has freed himself from the power of sin!"

2. **From now on.** "Your baptism was a promise (*1 Pet. 3:21*) to God! You must allow God's will to control your earthly lives! You must not allow either your human nature or fear of persecution to turn you back to the old ways! If you have overcome fear of persecution and death, weaker temptations will be no problem to you!"

desires. ³You have spent enough time in the past doing what the heathen like to do. Your lives were spent in indecency, lust, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and the disgusting worship of idols. ⁴And now the heathen are surprised when you do not join them in the same wild and reckless living, and so they insult you. ⁵But they will give an account of themselves to God, who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶That is why the Good News was preached also to the dead, to those who had been judged in their physical existence as all men are judged; it was preached to them so that in their spiritual existence they may live as God lives.

God. For you have spent ³ enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it ⁴ strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give ⁵ account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason ⁶ the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

Good Managers of God's Gifts

⁷The end of all things is near. You must be self-controlled and alert, to be able to pray.

⁸Above everything, love one another earnestly,

The end of all things is ⁷ near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above ⁸ all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a

3. **You have spent enough time.** "You never should have lived this way at all, but whatever time you spent was too much!" **Indecency.** Here the word means: "one who actually practices immorality, adultery, incest, homosexuality, etc., and doesn't care who knows it!" The technical term is *lasciviousness*.

4. **And now.** "The heathen cannot understand why you do not join them in these things as you once did! And so they insult you and make fun of you and say you are antisocial!" The worshippers of Bacchus, in their orgies and drinking parties, would run up and down the public streets and fields like crazy people, doing their indecencies!

5. **But they.** "Don't let these things disturb you. All these will have to answer to God for what they are doing! Christ will judge them as well as you!" In Jewish thought, *living* = God's people; *dead* = Gentiles. See *verse 6*.

6. **That is why.** "To encourage you to suffer death for Christ, know that is why the Good News was preached also to the Gentiles dead in sin (*Eph. 2:1*), to make them know Christ; to those who had been judged and condemned to death in their physical existence as all men are judged (*Rom. 3:9*); it was preached to them so that by the power of God, in their spiritual existence (as Christ now lives) they may *live as God lives*." This applies to both right now, and to eternity. [I have followed *MacKnight* on this.]

7. **The end of all things.** To the Jewish mind, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was the *end of all things!* See *Matt. 24:1-3* and notes. This can also be understood in view of *John's last hour* (*1 John 2:18*). **You must be.** Compare *1 Thess. 5:6-8; Matt. 24:42-44*.

8. **Love one another earnestly.** "Love is the mortar which builds living stones into the house where God lives through his Spirit (*Eph. 2:20-22*). Without this *love* to hold you together, you will be nothing but a pile of jagged rocks! If you love one another, you will be more strongly motivated to help one another, especially in this time of persecution! For love will make you overlook the many faults you see in each other!"

because love covers over many sins. ⁹Open your homes to each other, without complaining. ¹⁰Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God. ¹¹Whoever preaches, must preach God's words; whoever serves, must serve with the strength that God gives him, so that in all things praise may be given to God through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering as a Christian

¹²My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. ¹³Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers; this means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is resting on you. ¹⁵None of you should suffer because he is a murderer, or a thief, or a criminal, or tries

multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever spiritual gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for Being a Christian

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in Christ's sufferings, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

9. **Open your homes.** Persecution often made it necessary to "run for your life!" Hospitality was therefore especially important! See notes on *Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2*.

10. **Each one.** Peter means the gifts from the Spirit (*1 Cor. 12:4, 28*), but the same principle applies to everyone. Each one is to think of his abilities and talents as *gifts from God*, and to use them wisely for the good of others (*Gal. 6:10*).

11. **Whoever preaches.** "He must preach it as a message from God, of whom he is a servant (*1 Cor. 3:5* and note)." **Whoever serves.** Compare *Acts 6:2-4* and notes. "The one who serves must view this as serving Christ by proxy!" Compare *Matt. 25:31-46*. "Your good works praise God through Christ!" *Matt. 5:16*.

12. **Do not be surprised.** "Do not think the painful test is something which never happened to the people of God before!"

13. **Rather be glad.** "Suffering only proves that you are God's child! (See *Heb. 12:5-11*.) Be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings! (See *2 Cor. 1:5-7*.) When Christ's glory is revealed, you will receive your reward!"

14. **If you are insulted.** See *Matt. 5:3, 11-12* and notes. **This means.** "If you had the spirit from the Enemy of Christ, the world would not insult you. The fact that they do insult you because you are Christ's followers, proves that the glorious Spirit is resting on you!"

15. **None of you.** "Being guilty of such things as these bring neither glory or reward to those who suffer because of them!"

to manage other people's business. ¹⁶But if you suffer because you are a Christian, don't be ashamed of it, but thank God that you bear Christ's name.

¹⁷The time has come for the judgment to begin, and God's own people are the first to be judged. If it starts with us, how will it end with those who do not believe the Good News from God? ¹⁸As the scripture says,

"It is difficult for good men to be saved; what, then, will become of the godless and sinful?"

¹⁹So then, those who suffer because it is God's will for them, should by their good actions trust themselves completely to their Creator, who always keeps his promise.

The Flock of God

5 I appeal to the church elders among you, I who am an elder myself. I am a witness of Christ's sufferings, and I will share in the glory

However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, 18

"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

So then, those who suffer ¹⁹ according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

To Elders and Young Men

5 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be re-

16. But if you suffer. The name *Christian* was widely used by this time (*Acts 11:26*). Many good people suffered only because they were Christians! **But thank God.** "Praise God for his finished work in Christ that makes it possible for you to bear the *name* of Christ!"

17. The time has come. Those who think this passage teaches that in the Judgment, Christians will just barely squeeze by, do not give full honor to *God's finished work in Christ!* Christians are given full right to enter the eternal Kingdom (*2 Pet. 1:11*)!!! *MacKnight* is right in thinking the judgment is that which Christ predicted in *Matt. 23:25*. Even Christian Jews such as Peter would suffer in the events which led up to the destruction of Jerusalem! But Josephus tells us no Christian Jew was in Jerusalem when it was destroyed (see note on *Matt. 24:21*).

18. As the scripture says. Peter paraphrases *Prov. 11:31* and *Ezek. 9:8-11*. "The time has come for judgment to be poured out on the Jewish nation for their crimes, and it must begin with you Jewish Christians who have become *in fact* God's own people! If God allows such punishment to come on us, whom He loves so dearly because of our faith in Christ, what will He do to those Jews who reject His Son???" *Johnson* applies the *principle* to the whole church. "If even we Christians must suffer in this life, what will God do to the godless and sinful after the Judgment???"

19. So then. "In punishing the Jews, God is just! Therefore, if we suffer as a Christian, because it is God's will for us, we should trust ourselves completely to God's care by living holy lives full of good actions. And we know our Creator always keeps his promise, and he will raise us to eternal life at the Resurrection!" Compare *Rom. 8:28* and note.

1. To the church elders. See notes on *Titus 1:5*; *Acts 6:3*. **An elder myself.** Peter is an apostle, but he takes the title only of *elder* (which he was) to speak to them as *one of you*. **A witness.** Peter was an eye-witness of the things he writes about. **Will share.** As an apostle, Peter already shared in ruling the world through the Good News (*Matt. 19:28* and note). Peter here looks forward to glory that will be revealed at Christ's Coming, when we will see the *completeness* of God's finished work in Christ (which stands as a historical fact).

that will be revealed. I appeal to you: ²be shepherds of the flock that God gave you, and look after it willingly, as God wants you to, and not unwillingly. Do your work, not for mere pay, but from a real desire to serve. ³Do not try to rule over those who have been given into your care, but be examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the glorious crown which will never lose its brightness.

⁵In the same way, you younger men must submit yourselves to the older men. And all of you must put on the apron of humility, to serve one another; for the scripture says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ⁶Humble yourselves, then, under God's mighty hand, so that he will lift you up in his own good time.

vealed: Be shepherds of 2
God's flock that is under
your care, serving as over-
seers—not because you
must, but because you are
willing, as God wants you to
be; not greedy for money,
but eager to serve; not lord- 3
ing it over those entrusted
to you, but being examples
to the flock. And when the 4
Chief Shepherd appears, you
will receive the crown of
glory that will never fade
away.

Young men, in the same 5
way be submissive to those
who are older. Clothe your-
selves with humility toward
one another, because,
"God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the
humble."
Humble yourselves, there- 6
fore, under God's mighty
hand, that he may lift you

2. **Be shepherds.** In Palestine, the shepherd led the sheep out into the fields where they could find plenty to eat. The shepherd did not *drive* the sheep, but he led and they followed. Shepherds watched out for dangers, and if a sheep wandered away from the flock, he went after it and brought it back. This is a beautiful example of the work of the church elder. [Pastor is another word for shepherd. Preacher = evangelist. See note on *Eph. 4:11.*] **Willingly.** "God wants you to fill this job because you have a sense of the honor and mission of such work." **Not for mere pay.** Some church elders were paid a salary (*1 Tim. 5:17-18*). This is one of the *efficiencies* of a larger congregation. But the elder who is paid, must do it because he has a real desire to serve, and not with a "hired hand" attitude.

3. **Do not try to rule.** Church elders are not permitted to **DOMINEER** the flock of God! Compare what Jesus said in *Luke 22:25-26*. **Given into your care.** **THE FLOCK IS GOD'S!** The elders have been called to shepherd it! **But be examples.** "You should set the example in your own lives, of love, humility, benevolence, hospitality, etc., that God expects all Christians to develop!" Compare *1 Thess. 1:7; 1 Tim. 4:12*.

4. **And when.** "To encourage you to fulfill your mission, I tell you that when the Chief Shepherd appears, who owns the flock, you will receive the eternal reward!" [The idea of a put-in-for-life church Boss is not in the Bible!!!]

5. **In the same way.** Greeks and Romans looked at *humility* as being bad, not good. But things are to be different in the messianic community! As elders are to be motivated by a real desire to serve, so are all the others. **You younger men.** *MacKnight* understands this to mean *less mature Christians* are to submit to the *more mature leadership*. Compare *1 John 2:12-14*. **The apron of humility.** The TEV gives the literal translation, the NIV gives the meaning. *Julius Polux* says the apron was worn by slaves. Compare *James 4:6*. The quotation is *Prov. 3:34*.

6. **Humble yourselves.** "Since God resists the proud, be sure to humble yourselves under God's mighty hand! Take his punishments patiently, so that he will lift you to heaven in his own good time, as he promised!"

7 Throw all your worries on him, because he cares for you.

8 Be alert, be on watch! Your enemy, the Devil, roams around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. **9** Be firm in your faith and resist him, because you know that your fellow believers in all the world are going through the same kind of sufferings. **10** But after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who calls you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you, and give you firmness, strength, and a sure foundation. **11** To him be the power forever! Amen.

Final Greetings

12 I write you this brief letter with the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother. I want to encourage you and give my testimony that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 7

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 8 9

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. 10

With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in 11

7. Throw all your worries on him. "Don't spend a lot of time worrying about persecutions, or whether you will have food and shelter, or what the future holds for you! God loves you and will work things out for you in ways you cannot even imagine! Do what you can, of course, but throw all your worries on Him!!!" Compare *Matt. 6:25-34*.

8. Be alert! "Even though you throw all your worries on Him, yet do not neglect lawful opportunities to escape trouble!" Compare *Acts 22:25* and note. **Like a roaring lion.** A lion hunts quietly, so we see in this the fact that the Devil is *sneaky* in the way he tries to fool you and seduce you to sin! But this is a *roaring* lion! The lion roars to terrify and panic his victim and paralyze it with fear. Then the warning is: "Don't let the roaring of Satan frighten you into giving up your promise in Christ!"

9. And resist him. "Resist the Devil (*James 4:7*) by being firm in your faith and he will run away from you!" **Because you know.** "As you well know, all your fellow believers are going through the same things here in this world!" Compare *1 Thess. 2:14-16* and notes. [There is a tradition which says that after Christ declared the final punishment of the Devil in such clear terms, that *being* lost all hope and goes about eager to drag down all mankind to the doom which he faces!]

10. But after. "Compared to the joys of Eternity, the sufferings of this life are both *light* and *brief*!" Compare *2 Cor. 4:16-18*. **Will himself perfect you.** Since this is after *suffering a little while*, it must be speaking of *his eternal glory* which Christians expect to share in Eternity. Compare *1 John 3:1-3*. But Peter could also refer to the fact that the persecution would terminate at the death of Nero, and there would be a period of peace.

11. To him! Peter's doxology. *MacKnight* sees in this the fact that the Devil has no power in the Universe, or ability to tempt men, except as God permits!

12. With the help of Silas. This is Paul's old companion! He is the one who *wrote down* this letter and also the one who delivered it. *Johnson* says: "It has been supposed that Paul, then a prisoner at Rome, had sent Silas to Peter." [Silvanus is the Latin spelling of Silas.] **The true grace of God.** The Good News of God's finished work in Christ to set men free!

¹³Your sister church in Babylon, also chosen by God, sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. ¹⁴Greet each other with the kiss of Christian love.

May peace be with all of you who belong to Christ.

it. She who is in Babylon, ¹³ chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. Greet ¹⁴ one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

13. **In Babylon.** Probably Babylon on the Euphrates. Some think this is a *code name* for Rome, but history does not place Peter in Rome at this date. *Alford* (Greek Testament) says: "There is no reason whatever for regarding this any place but the Chaldean capital (Babylon on the Euphrates)." **Mark.** Probably the John Mark who wrote the Gospel.

14. **With the kiss.** See note on *Rom. 16:16*.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND LETTER FROM PETER

There are some reasons to think that Peter wrote this Second Letter shortly after Paul's death, as he himself expected execution (*2 Pet. 1:14*). The probable date is 67 A.D.

Peter writes to warn of *impending apostasy*, which is already at work as he writes! Leaders in the church, false teachers, would permit immorality and encourage sin in general, in order to make themselves rich. Compare *Acts 20:28-31* and notes. They would also cease to look for the Second Coming, and laugh at the idea of the Lord's return! Some parts of Second Peter are so similar to Jude, that some think one must have copied from the other. And it seems reasonably sure that Jude had read Second Peter before he wrote. However, since they both deal with the same problem, and probably write within a year of each other, it is to be expected that they will say much the same thing, yet with important differences. It would also be expected that the messianic community would develop its own *vocabulary*, with certain ways of saying things, and certain Scripture examples repeated. Read the Introductions to the Letters from Jude and James.

THE SECOND LETTER FROM PETER

1 From Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ—

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have been given a faith as precious as ours:

²May grace and peace be yours in full measure, through your knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

God's Call and Choice

³God's divine power has given us everything we need to live a godly life through our knowledge of the one who called us to share his own glory and goodness. ⁴In this way he has given us the very great and precious gifts he promised, so that by means of these gifts you may escape from the destructive lust that is in the world, and come

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

²Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Making One's Calling and Election Sure

³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he ⁴has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

1. **From Simon Peter.** As Simon, son of John, he lived his life in Judaism, until Jesus called him to *catch men!* Christ gave him the name of "Peter" (*John 1:42*). A **servant**. *2 Cor. 4:5* and note. **Apostle.** See note on *1 Pet. 1:1*. **To those.** Peter does not give the names of the churches or Christians he writes to, but in *2 Pet. 3:1* he mentions this is his second letter to them. Therefore, this Letter is addressed to those same churches mentioned in *1 Pet. 1:1*. **Have been given a faith.** Without the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, faith would be an impossibility!!! Then it is correct to say that Christians have been given a faith, in the sense of *Acts 11:18*. The Holy Spirit **PRODUCES** faith through the message of the Good News (*Rom. 10:17*). It is *God's finished work in Christ* that we reach out through faith to seize!

2. **May grace and peace.** This is God's blessing through Christ to all who believe. **Through your knowledge.** See *John 8:32* and note.

3. **Has given us everything.** God's divine power gave to the apostles (and through them to us) the **COMPLETE MESSAGE** (*Jude 3*) which makes it possible to share His own glory and goodness!!! This means we need no *new revelation*, no *voice of the living church*, no *tradition*. The Bible and the Bible only is the Christian's objective and infallible rule of faith and practice, alone sufficient that *he may be established in the present truth* (*verse 12*).

4. **In this way.** "He has created faith and hope in us by giving us these precious promises!" [Johnson refers "In this way" to *his own glory and goodness*.] **By means of these gifts.** "So that you might reach out through faith to seize these things to make yourself part of them. Through your union with Christ, you may share the divine nature, and escape from destructive lust (*1 Pet. 4:2-5*)."

to share the divine nature. ⁵For this very reason do your best to add goodness to your faith; to your goodness add knowledge; ⁶to your knowledge add self-control; to your self-control add endurance; to your endurance add godliness; ⁷to your godliness add brotherly love; and to your brotherly love add love. ⁸These are the qualities you need, and if you have them in abundance they will make you active and effective in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But whoever does not have them is so shortsighted that he cannot see, and has forgotten that his past sins have been washed away.

¹⁰So then, my brothers, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience; if you do so, you will never fall

For this very reason, make ⁵ every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if ⁹ anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

Therefore, my brothers, ¹⁰ be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall,

5. For this very reason. "Because God has called us to share his own glory and goodness." Peter teaches a practical religion which grows out of spiritual motives. Christians must cooperate actively with God, to build new characters as his children. **Do your best to add.** These qualities are not *stair-steps*, where you progress from one to the next. The idea is: in addition to your faith, seize goodness; in addition to your faith and goodness, seize knowledge; etc. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "*Faith is not only illumination but character.*" **Faith.** See *James 2:19* and note. **Goodness.** Moral purity and ethical conduct. **Knowledge.** Understanding the mind of Christ revealed in the Scriptures. There can be no substitute for studying God's word.

6. **Self-control.** See *Rom. 8:9* and note. Not *asceticism*, but self-discipline. **Endurance.** The active quality of holding firmly to the promises of Christ, confident that God rules and rewards! **Godliness.** Practical godliness. The *life-style* that grows out of a strong desire to be *godlike* in conduct. See *Eph. 4:22-24* and notes.

7. **Brotherly love.** See *1 John 4:19-21* and notes. **Love.** AGAPE. We see the kind of love which God and Christ showed to us in *Christ-on-the-cross*, and then we use this love in our relationship with everyone else! Only in this way will we fulfill the command to *love our enemies*. AGAPE makes it possible to *love* someone you do not *like!!!*

8. **These.** All of these together!!! **You need.** These are to become an integral part of Christian character. **They will make you.** "When your life is activated by these good qualities they will make you active and effective in your knowledge of the *higher life of the Spirit!*" *Lipscomb* says: "Either one abounds in good works, or his life is idle and fruitless. There is no alternative."

9. **But whoever.** "The one who does not seize for himself and make an integral part of his life these qualities and attitudes I have mentioned, is purposely making himself blind to the truth of Christ, and making himself forget the promise to be holy he made to God in his baptism (*1 Pet. 3:21!*)"

10. **So then.** "Because some may forget their promise to God, you must try even harder to make these good qualities an integral part of your life." **To make.** POIEISTHAI = to make or to do for one's self. **God's call and his choice.** See *2 Thess. 2:13-14* and notes. **A permanent experience.** It is impossible to avoid the human element in *God's call and his choice!* Peter's explanation is: *If you do so, you will never fall away.* [*MacKnight* thinks Peter has in mind the falling away and rejection of the Jews as a nation and the loss of their favored position as God's people (*Rom. 11:11* and note).]

away. ¹¹In this way you will be given the full right to enter the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹²For this reason I will always remind you of these matters, even though you already know them and are firmly fixed in the truth you have received. ¹³I think it only right for me to stir up your memory of these matters, as long as I am still alive. ¹⁴I know that I shall soon put off this mortal body, as our Lord Jesus Christ plainly told me. ¹⁵I will do my best, then, to provide a way for you to remember these matters at all times after my death.

Eyewitnesses of Christ's Glory

¹⁶We have not depended on made-up legends in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. With our own eyes we saw

and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Prophecy of Scripture

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

11. **You will be given the full right.** The one who does what *verse 10* says to do and does not fall away, will receive from God the full right to enter the eternal Kingdom. Note that Christians are in the Kingdom now (*Col. 1:13*), but *eternal Kingdom* refers to the time when Christ hands it over to the Father (*1 Cor. 15:23-24*). The Church Militant becomes the Church Triumphant!!!

12. **For this reason.** "So that you will make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience and be given the full right to enter the eternal Kingdom, I always remind you of the TRUTH of the historical Christ, which you already know. You must make your faith perfect through your actions, as Abraham did (*James 2:22*)." Contrast *verse 16*.

13. **I think it only right.** Peter seems to apologize for writing this second letter so soon. But he expects to die very soon (*verse 14*), and he wants to do as much as possible to make them stand firm in the truth. Compare *Acts 20:31*.

14. **I know.** See *John 13:36; 21:18-19*. Traditional history of the early church places Peter at Rome during the last year of his life, and says that he was crucified upside down. If, as some think, Paul had already been executed, Peter would not need a special revelation from God to know that the time of his death was near!

15. **A way for you to remember.** By putting His word in a written form, God (working through Peter and the other writers) gave mankind a *magic door* through which they may come again and again to learn God's truth and to be reminded of all the facts of the Good News which was given to the apostles!!! Even though Peter and the other writers have been dead these many years, yet they still speak to us on the pages of Scripture!!!

16. **We have not.** See *1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; Titus 1:14*. Peter points to the real, historical Christ Jesus. **Mighty coming.** This must be the First Coming, since: (1) the context speaks of history; (2) *PAROUSIA* simply means *coming, arrival*, and is a non-technical word. Without the First Coming, there could be no Second Coming. Peter says *we saw*!!! Compare *1 John 1:1-4*.

his greatness. ¹⁷We were there when he was given honor and glory by God the Father, when the voice came to him from the Supreme Glory, saying, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am well pleased!" ¹⁸We ourselves heard this voice coming from heaven, when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

¹⁹So we are even more confident of the message proclaimed by the prophets. You will do well to pay attention to it, because it is like a lamp shining in a dark place, until the Day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in your hearts.

²⁰Above all else, however, remember this: no one can explain, by himself, a prophecy in the Scriptures. ²¹For no prophetic message ever came just from the will of man, but men were carried along by the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God.

For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well-pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

17. **We were there.** See *Matt. 17:1-8* and notes. Peter, James, and John were there when Jesus was transfigured. Peter points to this event as PROOF of the truth of the Good News!!! And certainly the transfiguration is also a GUARANTEE of the Second Coming!!!

18. **We ourselves heard.** *Lumby* says: "We learn here why the Apostles were taken with Jesus to witness His transfiguration. . . . He, and the rest with him, felt no doubt, that such a death as Jesus had spoken of would be, humanly speaking, the ruin of their hopes. . . . They heard that He who was to die was the very Son of God. The voice came from the glory of heaven; and from henceforth their hearts were still, even Peter's voice being less heard than before. . . . God's voice had been heard there attesting the Divinity of their Lord and Master; the place whereon they had thus stood was for evermore holy ground."

19. **Even more confident.** *Johnson* says: "No class of evidence had more power with Jews than to show them that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah) of whom the prophets spoke." The things mentioned in *verses 16-18* make Peter and the others even more confident in the message proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets. This also gives us more confidence in the message of the Good News, especially the fact that Jesus is Coming Again!!! **Until the Day dawns.** *MacKnight* says: "Until the Day of Judgment dawns, and Christ, surrounded with the glory of the Father, appears like the morning-star, which, by assuring you of his coming, may be said to arise (shine) in your hearts." See *Rev. 22:16-17*.

20. **Above all else.** The false teachers, whom Peter warns against, used *made-up legends* to interpret the prophecies, and even the Good News. Peter explains more about this in *chapter 2*. The Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament! Therefore the interpretation placed on it by Christ and his apostles must be the *standard or norm* of its *true meaning!!!* For examples of this, see *Acts 2:16-17; 13:32-33; 15:14-18*. [This can also be taken as the NIV does. *Johnson* says: "It is not an interpretation of the knowledge and feelings of the prophet, but of the will of God."]

21. **For no prophetic message.** *MacKnight* says: "For never, either anciently or lately, was prophecy uttered by the will of the prophet, but the holy prophets of God spoke their prophecies, being inspired by the Holy Spirit: So that the prophecies recorded in the scriptures are not the words of men, but of God." He also says: "Not, however, like the heathen priestesses, by the agency of evil spirits, who deprived them of the exercise of their faculties (senses), but by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, during which they had the entire use of their rational powers (*1 Cor. 14:32*)."

False Teachers

2 False prophets appeared in the past among the people, and in the same way false teachers will appear among you. They will bring in destructive, untrue doctrines, and deny the Master who redeemed them, and so bring upon themselves sudden destruction. ²Even so, many will follow their immoral ways; and, because of what they do, people will speak evil of the Way of truth. ³In their greed these false teachers will make a profit out of telling you made-up stories. For a long time now their Judge has been ready, and their Destroyer has been wide awake!

⁴God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell, where they are kept chained in darkness, waiting for the Day of Judgment. ⁵God did not spare the ancient world, but brought the Flood on the world of godless men; the only ones he saved were Noah, who preached righteousness, and seven other people.

False Teachers and Their Destruction

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness,

1. **False prophets.** "In speaking about God's true prophets, I must remind you that there were also false prophets among the people in the past, and in the same way you must expect false teachers to appear among you!" **People** means the Jewish Nation. Christ predicted such things would happen (see *Matt. 24:24*). **Destructive, untrue doctrines.** See the Introduction to James and First John. And **deny the Master.** We do not know for sure just how they denied the Master, but one of the first things that the *circumcision party* did, was to try to get rid of Christ-on-the-cross! See note on *Phil. 3:18*. Some denied Jesus' Divinity; some denied Christ's humanity. **Bring upon themselves.** Compare note on *Mat. 24:21*.

2. **Many will follow.** *MacKnight* says: "And many nominal Christians will embrace their destructive heresies, because they encourage them in their sins." **Speak evil of the Way of truth.** "Those who claim to follow Christ, but who live such bad lives, will cause others to say evil things about the Way of truth. False teaching, since it denies truth, must always eventually end up in immoral living."

3. **In their greed.** "In their greed for your money, these false teachers will tell you made-up legends to try to get control of you and your property!" Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 1:10-11*. **For a long time.** See *Jude 4* and note.

4. **God did not spare.** "The punishment of these false teachers and those who follow them is both certain and sure! Even the angels, of such high rank, were punished by God when they sinned!" See *Jude 6* and note.

5. **The ancient world.** This means the world before the Flood. God offered to save these people all during the 120 years that Noah was building the ark (*1 Pet. 3:20*). Through Noah he proclaimed this to the people. But at the end of the 120 years, God's offer terminated, and punishment came swiftly on all who refused to repent! But note that God saved righteous Noah and his family!!!

⁶God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying them with fire, and made them an example of what will happen to the godless. ⁷He rescued Lot, a good man, who was troubled by the immoral conduct of lawless men. ⁸That good man lived among them and day after day saw and heard such things that his good heart was tormented by their evil actions. ⁹And so the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from their trials, and how to keep the wicked under punishment for the Day of Judgment, ¹⁰especially those who follow their filthy bodily lusts and despise God's authority.

These false teachers are bold and arrogant, and show no respect for the glorious beings

and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of their sinful natures and despise authority.

Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander

6. **Sodom and Gomorrah.** See *Jude 7* and note. The presence of only ten righteous men in these cities would have prevented their destruction. The destroying fire was symbolic of eternal punishment.

7. **He rescued Lot.** Peter points out that Lot was saved because he lived a righteous life, even in such a wicked place! Lot was deeply disturbed by the sin of the cities, but was not so successful with his family as was Noah. When he warned his sons-in-law, "But his sons-in-law regarded him as joking." (*Gen. 19:14* Zamenhof).

8. **That good man.** *MacKnight* says: "Lot dwelled sixteen years in Sodom after he parted with Abraham; which was a long space of severe trial. Doubtless Lot, who was so exceedingly grieved with the lewdness of the Sodomites from day to day, often earnestly desired to depart from so wicked a city. But he was directed, it seems, by God to remain, that he might be an example of his goodness and power in delivering the godly both from temptation and punishment."

9. **And so the Lord.** "The examples of Noah and Lot show that God is willing to rescue godly men from their trials." **And how to keep.** "The examples of the angels who sinned and of Sodom and Gomorrah (*1 Pet. 3:19*) show God will keep the wicked under punishment (*Luke 16:19-31* and notes) for the Day of Judgment. Judgment will not be *judicial*, but an *official division* of the resurrected dead (*Matt. 25:32*).

10. **Especially.** "If God will punish sinners of all kinds, he will especially punish those who follow filthy bodily lusts and despise God's authority." These *filthy bodily lusts* are the perversions of human nature that Paul describes in *Rom. 1:18-32*. **These false teachers.** Now Peter describes them. **Bold and arrogant.** This is their motivation. *MacKnight* says: "In this passage the apostle had an eye to the false teachers of the Jewish nation, whose principles led them to despise the heathen magistrates, and even to revile (slander) and resist them." Compare *Rom. 13:1-10*. **Show no respect.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The false teachers may have scoffed at the idea both of angelic help, and of diabolic temptation. Their tendency seems to have been to make light of the Unseen, to foster a sense of the unreality both of sin and of goodness and to reduce the motives of conduct to a vulgar hedonism."

above; instead, they insult them. ¹¹Even the angels, who are so much stronger and mightier than these false teachers, do not accuse them with insults in the presence of the Lord. ¹²But these men act by instinct, like wild animals born to be captured and killed; they insult things they do not understand. They will be destroyed like wild animals; ¹³they will be paid with suffering for the suffering they caused. Pleasure for them is to do anything in broad daylight that will satisfy their bodily appetites; they are a shame and a disgrace as they join you in your meals, all the while enjoying their deceitful ways! ¹⁴They want to look at nothing else but immoral women; their appetite for sin is never satisfied. They lead weak people into a trap. Their hearts are trained to be greedy. They are under God's curse! ¹⁵They have left the straight path and have lost their way; they have followed the path taken by Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the money he would get for doing wrong, ¹⁶and was rebuked for his sin. A dumb ass spoke with a human voice and stopped the prophet's insane action.

celestial beings; yet even ¹¹angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. But these men blas- ¹²pheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

They will be paid back ¹³with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes ¹⁴full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! They have left the straight ¹⁵way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. But he was ¹⁶rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—a beast without speech—who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

11. Even the angels. "Even the holy angels do not insult these wicked false teachers who are doing so much damage among the churches!" See the example Jude gives in *Jude 9*.

12. But these men. "They are amoral like wild animals, fierce, greedy, destructive, rutting, etc." **They insult.** "They insult spiritual things that seem nonsense to them (*1 Cor. 2:14*)." **They will be.** "Both in the present and in the future life, they will be destroyed by their own actions!"

13. They will be paid. "*For sin pays its wage - death*" (*Rom. 6:23*). Compare *Rev. 18:6*. **Pleasure for them.** Sinners ordinarily do their deeds in secret. These are so bold and arrogant that they do not care who knows the sins they commit, and so they do these things openly without shame, like wild animals!!! **They are.** See *Jude 12* and note.

14. They want. See *Matt. 5:28* and note. The Greek says literally: "Having eyes full of an adulteress." This can mean: (1) they have an obsession to look at immoral women; (2) in their mind, every woman is immoral. *MacKnight* says: "They inflamed themselves by looking lasciviously (lewdly) on the married women, whom they had debauched (seduced) by telling them that Christ's precept (command) of loving one another was chiefly to be understood of the mutual love of the sexes. Thus did these wicked teachers and their disciples live in riot (orgy) by their own deceits." Compare *Rev. 2:20* and note. **God's curse!** See *Matt. 25:41* and note.

15. Left the straight path. Balaam sold out to an evil cause, for the money that was in it. See *Rev. 2:14* and note.

16. And was rebuked. See *Num. 22:28-31*. The false teachers claimed the things they were doing was based on special knowledge that God had given them. Peter here implies that what they are doing is really insane!!!

¹⁷These men are like dried-up springs, like clouds blown along by a storm; God has reserved a place for them in the deepest darkness. ¹⁸They make proud and stupid statements, and use immoral bodily lusts to trap those who are just beginning to escape from among people who live in error. ¹⁹They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of destructive habits—for a man is a slave of anything that has conquered him. ²⁰If men have escaped from the corrupting forces of the world through their knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and then are again caught and conquered by them, such men are in worse condition at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹It would have been much better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than to know it and then turn away from the sacred command

These men are springs ¹⁷
without water and mists
driven by a storm. Blackest
darkness is reserved for
them. For they mouth emp-
ty, boastful words and, by
appealing to the lustful de-
sires of sinful human nature,
they entice people who are
just escaping from those who
live in error. They promise ¹⁸
them freedom, while they
themselves are slaves of de-
pravity—for a man is a slave
to whatever has mastered
him. If they have escaped ¹⁹
the corruption of the world
by knowing our Lord and
Savior Jesus Christ and are
again entangled in it and
overcome, they are worse off
at the end than they were at
the beginning. It would have ²⁰
been better for them not to
have known the way of right-
eousness, than to have
known it and then to turn
their backs on the sacred
commandment that was ²¹

17. **Dried-up springs.** The East is dry, with few springs and little rain. It was a tragic disappointment for a thirsty traveler to come to a spring and find it dried-up. Peter says the false teachers are like that. They promise much but actually give nothing. **Clouds.** The farmer was equally disappointed to see clouds that promised rain, but gave none. Compare *Jude 12* and notes. **God has reserved.** In scripture, darkness symbolizes a condition of misery without hope. Compare *Matt. 8:12*. Here Peter is talking about eternal punishment.

18. **Proud and stupid.** "They claim to be more important than us apostles and so they make proud and stupid statements to impress people." Use **immoral bodily lusts.** "They seduce people to join with them in the immoral lusts which they, the false teachers, are addicted to." **Just beginning to escape.** The life-style of the Christian is in sharp contrast to that of the pagan. See *1 Pet. 4:2-4* and notes. Therefore it is necessary to re-educate the convert to Christ. See *1 Thess. 1:9* and note. New converts are especially vulnerable to the type of thing the false teachers use to trap them. This is one place where the mature Christian can do a great service for Christ. See *Gal. 6:1-2* and notes.

19. **They promise them.** See Paul's warning in *Gal. 5:13* and note. The false teachers claimed that being free in Christ gave a person the right to do anything and everything they pleased!!! **They themselves are slaves.** See *John 8:34* and note.

20. **If men have escaped.** This includes the false teachers themselves, who had at one time escaped from sin through Jesus Christ. It is not enough to escape from sin: you must actively fill your life with good!!! If you purposely return to sin, it will be much worse than before and much more difficult to escape from!!! See what Jesus said in *Matt. 12:45* and note.

21. **It would have been.** Compare *1 Tim. 4:2*. If a man is ignorant of truth, you can give him truth more easily, than if he already knows it and has renounced it! If a man gives up the Christian life-style and returns to the habit of sin, he is doing a deliberate act that puts him in the power of the Devil. This could lead to the condition of *Heb. 6:4-6; 10:29*.

that was given them. ²²What happened to them shows that the proverb is true, "A dog goes back to what it has vomited," and, "A pig that has been washed goes back to roll in the mud."

The Promise of the Lord's Coming

3 My dear friends! This is now the second letter I have written you. In both letters I have tried to arouse pure thoughts in your minds by reminding you of these things. ²I want you to remember the words that were spoken long ago by the holy prophets, and the command from the Lord and Savior which was given you by your apostles. ³First of all, you must understand that in the last days some men will appear whose lives are controlled by their own lusts. They will

passed on to them. Of them ²²the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

The Day of the Lord

3 Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. ²I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

³First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil

22. What happened. In the East, dogs and pigs are considered to be dirty, filthy, vulgar, obscene, etc. *Lumby* says: "But all the loathing which attached to these outcasts of the brute creation did not suffice to portray the defilement of these teachers of lies and their apostate lives. It needed those other grosser features - the return to the disgorged meal; the greed for filth, where a temporary cleansing serves, as it were, to give a relish for fresh wallowing - these traits were needed ere the full vileness of those sinners could be expressed." *Lipscomb* adds: "It should be observed that in both instances the animal was *changed*. That each returned to its former offensive habits does not alter the fact that a change had occurred."

1. My dear friends. AGAPETOI = those who form a *unity* in Christian love. Peter uses this four times in this chapter. **This is now.** He refers to the Letter of First Peter, and implies that only a short time separates the two letters. See note on *2 Pet. 1:13*. **I have tried to arouse.** As Peter writes, the next few years will be especially crucial for Jewish Christians. The Jewish wars will climax in the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), perhaps *one-third* of the Jewish nation will be killed, and the Jewish Christians will barely escape (*1 Pet. 4:17-18*). Peter writes to arouse pure thoughts in their minds, because this will be the best defence against the false teachers. Truth and love are the two strongest weapons, and no false teacher can use them!!!

2. To remember the words. The things spoken by the Old Testament prophets. See note on *2 Pet. 1:19*. The Old Testament prophets predicted the coming of Christ in Judgment (*compare Jude 14*). **And the command.** The command of Christ to prepare for the Judgment. Peter could mean the whole truth which Christ gave to his apostles.

3. First of all. The *last days* began at Pentecost (*Acts 2:16-17*) and will continue until Christ Comes Again!!! Christians live in a *last-hour situation* (see *1 John 2:18* and note). False teachers will arise all during the time God's offer of salvation is still in effect!!! **Make fun of you.** See *Jude 18* and note.

make fun of you 'and say, "He promised to come, didn't he? Where is he? Our fathers have already died, but everything is still the same as it was since the creation of the world!" 'They purposely ignore the fact that long ago God spoke, and the heavens and earth were created. The earth was formed out of water, and by water, 'and it was by water also, the water of the Flood, that the old world was destroyed. 'But the heavens and earth that now exist are being preserved, by the same word of God, for destruction by fire. They are being kept for the day when godless men will be judged and destroyed.

'But do not forget this one thing, my dear friends! There is no difference in the Lord's sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same. 'The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.

desires. They will say, 4
 "Where is this 'coming' he 5
 promised? Ever since our 6
 fathers died, everything goes 7
 on as it has since the begin- 8
 ning of creation." But they 9
 deliberately forget that long 10
 ago by God's word the heav- 11
 ens existed and the earth 12
 was formed out of water and 13
 with water. By water also the 14
 world of that time was de- 15
 luded and destroyed. By the 16
 same word the present heav- 17
 ens and earth are reserved 18
 for fire, being kept for the 19
 day of judgment and de- 20
 struction of ungodly men.

But do not forget this one 21
 thing, dear friends: With the 22
 Lord a day is like a thousand 23
 years, and a thousand years 24
 are like a day. The Lord is 25
 not slow in keeping his 26
 promise, as some under- 27
 stand slowness. He is patient 28
 with you, not wanting any- 29
 one to perish, but everyone 30
 to come to repentance.

4. **And say.** "These people will say: 'Where is his promised Coming to raise the dead and destroy the earth??? For from the time of the death of the first race of men, all parts of our universe continue just as they were in the Creation. Christ's Coming is therefore only something which you dreamed up!!!' "

5. **They purposely ignore.** "They say the stability of the universe disproves both Creation and any coming destruction. But in saying this they must purposely ignore the facts which they already know! Our universe HAS NOT continued to be just as it was without any changes, as the Flood proves!!!" Was formed. See *Gen. 1:7-10; Psalm 136:6; 24:2.*

6. **By water also.** *MacKnight* says: "The reason is, if the word of God destroyed the old world by water, he certainly is able to destroy it a second time." See *Gen. 7:11-12.*

7. **That now exist.** "But though the destruction of the old world shows that the present world is capable of being destroyed, I do not say that it will be again destroyed by water. The same word of God who destroyed the old world by water, is now preserving the present heavens and earth for their future destruction by fire at the time when godless men will be judged and destroyed." On being preserved by the word, see *Heb. 1:3.*

8. **But do not forget.** "Do not listen to those who say the fact that Christ has not come yet proves he will not come at all. God is not limited by time as we are, and both one day and a thousand years are the same thing to him!" Peter paraphrases *Psalm 90:4* to show that God works in ETERNITY!!!

9. **The Lord is not slow.** "If the Lord seems slow to keep his promise to destroy the world, it is certainly not because he cannot do it!!!" Instead, God acted in Christ to offer salvation to all mankind! God desires all human beings to hear and come (*John 6:44-45; 1 Tim. 2:4-6; Rev. 22:17*). Why does God delay??? *Oecuminius* writes: "The time of the end is deferred, that the number of them who are to be saved may be filled up." Compare *Rev. 6:9-11* and notes.

¹⁰But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. ¹¹Since all these things will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be? Your lives should be holy and dedicated to God, ¹²as you wait for the Day of God, and do your best to make it come soon—the Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat. ¹³But we wait for what God has promised: new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home.

¹⁴And so, my friends, as you wait for that Day, do your best to be pure and faultless in God's

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with

10. **Will come as a thief.** Compare *Matt. 24:36-44* and notes. **On that Day.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "No distinction is made between the Day of the Lord, and the Coming of Christ. This is remarkable, as excluding any idea of millenarian teaching, which speedily made its appearance in the Early Church." *Clement of Rome* paraphrases this verse in his writings: "But ye know that the day of judgment cometh even now as a burning oven, and the powers of the heavens shall melt, and all the earth as lead melting on the fire, and then shall appear the secret and open works of men" (*2 Clem. 16:3*). **Will vanish.** HEURETHESETAI rather than the KATAKAESETAI of the T.R. The point is: (1) our material creation as we know it will vanish; (2) all (unforgiven) human sin will be laid bare.

11. **Since.** "Since you know the prediction that all these things will be destroyed in this way, what should be your response??? You should always be prepared for the Lord to Come!!!"

12. **As you wait.** See *Phil. 3:20* and note. **To make it come soon.** Compare note on *1 Cor. 16:22*. This is John's *last-hour situation* (*1 John 2:18* and note). Christians are to have a sense of *urgency* and pray for Christ to bring the Day of Judgment! This is the attitude which the early church had. **The Day when.** Peter repeats what he had said in *verse 10* for emphasis. This is also to introduce the next verse.

13. **But we wait.** The Coming will be both judgment for the wicked and triumph for the Kingdom! The Church Militant will become the Church Triumphant!!! **New heavens and a new earth.** *MacKnight* understands God's promise to Abraham of Canaan to refer to this new creation, and that Isaiah describes this in *Isa. 65:17-23*. Compare *Acts 3:21*; *Rom. 8:18-23*; *Col. 1:20*. The fact that our bodies will be raised and transformed would certainly fit in with the idea of a new earth (after this one is destroyed by fire). See *1 Cor. 15:35-54*. Compare *Rev. 21:1-7* and notes.

14. **And so, my friends.** "Since we expect this whole world-system to be destroyed, we must each do our best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with him. We must firmly hold to God's *finished work in Christ* as the means of our being *put right with God*. And as God's people, we must live lives which are holy and pure!!!" See *2 Pet. 1:10-11* and notes.

sight and to be at peace with him. ¹⁵Look on our Lord's patience as the opportunity he gives you to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom God gave him. ¹⁶This is what he says in all his letters, when he writes on this subject. There are some difficult things in his letters which ignorant and unstable people explain falsely, as they do with other passages of the Scriptures. So they bring on their own destruction.

¹⁷But you, my friends, already know this. Be on your guard, then, so that you will not be led away by the errors of lawless men and fall from your safe position. ¹⁸But continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, now and forever! Amen.

him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

15. **As the opportunity.** "Don't think of the Lord's delay in coming as proof that he will not come at all!!! Instead, think of it as the opportunity which he gives all to be saved!!!!" See note on *verse 9. Paul wrote.* Remember that much writing was done very early in the life of the church (*Luke 1:1-4* and notes). Since the New Testament writers wrote by inspiration, they could write down God's message in a short time. These writings were being widely circulated, as would be expected, and these churches had no doubt read all that Paul had written, probably even Second Timothy. It is important also to note that Peter puts his *stamp of approval* on the things which Paul has written. There is **ONE GOSPEL** for BOTH Jews and Gentiles!!!

16. **This is what he says.** This implies that Paul is now dead and that Peter has read everything Paul had written. Note that Peter calls their attention to the fact that Paul wrote the very same thing about the Judgment that he is writing!!! **Some difficult things.** This is not criticism of Paul, but rather of the false teachers who purposely misuse Paul's writings. See Introduction to James. **With other passages.** Note that Peter includes Paul's writings as part of the Scriptures!!! This certainly proves that at this point in time there was already in existence a body of writings accepted as authentic Scripture - in addition to the Old Testament Scriptures!!!

17. **Already know this.** "You already know all these things I have warned you about. I just want to put you on your guard so that no false teachers will be able to steal your promise away from you and make you fall from your safe position!!!"

18. **But continue to grow.** See *1 Pet. 2:1-3* and notes. A failure to grow spiritually exposes you to the Devil's power!!! But you never progress *away from* God's act in Christ to set you free: you progress deeper and deeper *into* it!!! Everything God has for *his people* is based on **CHRIST-ON-THE-CROSS!!!** To him. This is Peter's doxology of praise to Jesus Christ our Messiah!!!

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

The history of John, the son of Zebedee, is given in the introduction to the Gospel of John. No one knows for sure when this Letter was written, but it is likely that John wrote his Gospel, 1, 2, 3 John, and Revelation, all in the last decade of the first century.

The apostles both believed and taught that Christ was *both* God and man, *both* divine and human! Two lines of false thinking grew out of distorting this fact. Some of the false teachers, finding that Messiah was called in the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament), *God*, and *the Son of God*, decided it was impossible that he could become a human being with a body like ours. They declared the divinity of Christ, but denied he came in human form. Therefore, they said, Christ only seemed to have a body, only seemed to suffer and die, and that he really did none of the things mentioned in the Gospels. *MacKnight* says: "By pretending that Christ suffered death only in appearance, the Docetae endeavored to avoid the ignominy of the crucifixion of their Master, and to free themselves from that obligation to suffer for their religion, which was laid on them both by Christ's precept and example." John makes it plain that those who deny the reality of Christ's humanity are *motivated* by the spirit of the Enemy of Christ (Antichrist)! See *1 John 4:2-3*.

Others of the false teachers believed all that was said about Jesus in the Gospels, but denied his divinity. They could not believe the Son of God could experience the things which happened to Jesus. Therefore they denied the *virgin birth* and said Jesus was completely human. They said that after his baptism, *the Christ* descended on him in the form of a dove and stayed with him during the work of his public ministry. Then, they said, *the Christ* left him, and Jesus suffered, died, was raised from death. But, they said, *the Christ* was not involved in this, since He is *Spirit*. John deals with the divinity of Christ (*1 John 2:22*) who *is* Jesus, and that *Christ* came through the blood of his death as well as the water of his baptism (*1 John 5:6; 2 John 7*).

These Letters of John, then, deal with the pre-existence of Jesus, the incarnation (becoming human), the real existence in human form, the actual death of Jesus the Christ in which his blood was poured out. Also, John deals with the theme of LOVE. Paul has shown us that the entire Christian life is *meaningless* without the reality of *love*! (See *1 Cor. ch 13.*) John goes deep into the nature of love and shows that to the degree that we *love*, we are like God *who is love*! This is in direct contrast to the false teachers, who taught and practiced a *loveless* intellectualism (*1 John 2:7-9; 3:10-18.*)

John deals with three distortions of truth; (1) "If we can never be completely free from the act of sin in this life, why try to be holy?" (2) "Can one who is already a Christian be forgiven if he sins?" Some were saying that the only forgiveness was in the act of *new birth* (*John 3:5*), therefore they delayed their *act of new birth* until they had reached the point of death. (3) "If we can be forgiven every sin through *Christ-on-the-cross*, why not go ahead and sin, since forgiveness comes so easy?" These, then, are all topics which John deals with in this Letter.

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

The Word of Life

1 We write to you about the Word of life, which has existed from the very beginning: we have heard it, and we have seen it with our eyes; yes, we have seen it, and our hands have touched it. **2** When this life became visible, we saw it; so we speak of it and tell you about the eternal life which was with the Father and was made known to us. **3** What we have seen and heard we tell to you also, so that you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** We write this in order that our joy may be complete.

God Is Light

5 Now this is the message that we have heard from his Son and announce to you: God is light

The Word of Life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

Walking in the Light

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness

1. **We write to you.** Compare *John 20:30-31*. **The Word of life.** Jesus the Christ, who is the Eternal Logos. **From the very beginning.** Since the Logos is Eternal and existed before time began (*John 1:1*), we say with *MacKnight* that John has in mind the Word *becoming* a human being (*John 1:14*). John speaks as an *eyewitness!* John declares they have *heard it, seen it, touched it!* John and the other apostles saw Jesus baptized, saw the Spirit come down on him, his preaching, his miracles, his transfiguration, his agony in the garden, his suffering, and all the other things which demonstrated the reality of his life in human form.

2. **Became visible.** The Eternal Logos was not visible until he became a human being. **We saw it.** The apostles were eyewitnesses who were given a special mission. Compare *Acts 1:21-22*. **So we speak.** The mission of the apostles was to give proof of this Word of life. Compare *Acts 10:39-42*.

3. **What we.** Compare *Matt. 13:16*. John repeats himself to *guarantee* to us the reality of the Eternal Logos becoming a human being!!! **Fellowship.** Some belonged to secret fellowships and claimed special knowledge. John points out that he and the others have fellowship with the Father and the Son (see *verse 7* also), and that those who believe what he is saying may also become part of this fellowship.

4. **In order.** "These things, about our fellowship with the Father and the Son, we write to you who have joined with us in this fellowship, that you will make our joy complete by living in the truth of the Word of life!"

5. **Now this is the message.** "I want to show you the advantage of joining with us in this fellowship." **From his Son.** *The Christ* is the source of this message. Compare *Heb. 1:1-2* and notes. **God is light.** The ancients thought of light as the purest and most perfect of all material substance. The message that *God is light* says that He is pure and holy!!! Compare *1 Tim. 6:16*. John declares three things about God in his writings: God is *light*; God is *Spirit* (*John 4:24*); God is *love* (*1 John 4:8*). [The mystery religions called their "secret knowledge" *light*.]

and there is no darkness at all in him. ⁶If, then, we say that we have fellowship with him, yet at the same time live in the darkness, we are lying both in our words and in our actions. ⁷But if we live in the light—just as he is in the light—then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, makes us clean from every sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and there is no truth in us. ⁹But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and make us clean from all our wrongdoing. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make a liar out of God, and his word is not in us.

at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not put the truth into practice. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his word has no place in our lives.

6. **If, then.** Here is a *test* of fellowship. Since light symbolizes purity and holiness, darkness symbolizes sin, evil, error, etc. **We are lying.** "If we claim fellowship with God and Christ, yet live lives dark with sin, we show ourselves to be liars!"

7. **But if we.** This is the other side of the test of fellowship. "If our lives are filled with the light of purity and holiness, this shows the truthfulness of our claims to fellowship with the Father and the Son." **Fellowship with one another.** John is not speaking about the fellowship of Christians with each other, but with the Father and his Son. **The blood of Jesus.** The blood symbolizes God's act in Christ to set men free. Compare *Rev. 7:14; 12:11; Heb. 9:12-14. Makes us clean.* John uses the *present continuous* verb form to emphasize that *living in the light* keeps us in the *fellowship* where the blood of Jesus *continuously makes us clean* from sin. But if we walk in darkness, we lose this fellowship! The blood of Christ's death declares the reality of the incarnation, which in turn makes possible the fellowship with the Father and the Son and the continuous forgiveness available to those who remain in this fellowship.

8. **That we have no sin.** Some were making the claim that they had no sins at all because they had reached perfection in this life! What they actually were doing was to say that the gospel allowed them to do everything without it being counted as sin. **We deceive ourselves.** "If you say that you have progressed on beyond *being put right with God* and no longer have any need of the forgiveness which the blood of Jesus offers, you are far away from the truth and are deceiving yourself!" Compare *Rom. 7:14-25* and notes.

9. **But if we.** The forgiveness which the blood of Jesus offers to Christians, requires a human response to *reach out to seize it!* **Confess.** God will forgive the Christian every sin which is confessed to Him. Confession is the first step toward repentance and forgiveness. See notes on *Acts 8:20-24*.

10. **If we say.** If we refuse to confess our sin to God, we are by our *refusal* saying that we have not sinned. Since God says we have sinned (*Rom. 3:23; James 1:13-15*), we call Him a liar when we deny it, as some were doing. As a result, his word is not in us, when we deny that we have sinned. **Note:** these words of John are not written to outsiders, but to members of the messianic community! Since John writes at the close of the first century, he is writing to many second and third generation Christians. John is emphasizing the Christian's *constant need* for the saving power of Christ!!! It is the Christian who cannot claim he has not sinned! It is the Christian who must find forgiveness by confessing his sins to God! *Acts 2:38* is to outsiders; *1 John 1:9* is to Christians!

Christ Our Helper

2 I write you this, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have Jesus Christ, the righteous, who pleads for us with the Father. ²And Christ himself is the means by which our sins are forgiven, and not our sins only, but also the sins of all men.

³If we obey God's commands, then we are sure that we know him. "If someone says, "I do know him," but does not obey his commands, such a person is a liar and there is no truth in him. ⁵But whoever obeys his word is the one whose love for God has really been made perfect. This is how we can be sure that we live in God: "whoever says that he lives in God should live just as Jesus Christ did.

2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteousness One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

We can be sure we know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1. **I write you this.** "I write to you that God will keep his promise and do what is right by forgiving your sins. But you must not take this as permission to sin, because you must not sin! Instead, you must try to be holy!" It is a paradox that the Christian lives in *confident desperation!* John speaks of two kinds of sin (*1 John 5:16-17*). Even though a Christian is set free from sin and put right with God through the *imputed righteousness* of Christ (*Rom. 8:1-4*), still he must continually be at war with his (her) human nature (*2 Pet. 1:10; 3:17*). See the Introduction to this Letter. **My Children.** John writes with the love of a father to his children. **But if anyone does sin.** In the first chapter John shows that no Christian is completely without sin. Our sin is rebellion against God! But if we do sin, betrayed by our weak human nature, there is a way for Christians to be forgiven! **Who pleads for us.** Christ is our Helper, the Holy Spirit is *another* Helper! Both plead with God for us (*Rom. 8:26*), but only Jesus brings God and men together as a mediator (*1 Tim. 2:5*).

2. **Is the means.** This is a form of the same Greek word used to describe *the place where sins are forgiven* (see note on *Heb. 9:5*). "Our Helper does not plead that we are innocent, but pleads the **MERIT** of his *crucified body* as the means of our forgiveness! Knowing this teaches us that *sin and forgiveness* are not *make believe!!!* **The sins of all men.** "So great is the merit of *Christ-on-the-cross*, that *whoever is thirsty* may accept the water of life as a gift (*Rev. 22:17*).

3. **If we obey.** Some said as soon as you *knew* there was a True God, you had eternal life, regardless of how you lived. John is saying that the only way to *identify* one who does *know God*, is by **THEIR OBEYING** God's commands. Compare *James 2:19* and note.

4. **If someone says.** Talk is cheap! Actions really show what a person does *in fact* believe! The one who claims to know God, but does not obey God's commands, proves both that he is a liar and that he does not know the truth of God.

5. **But whoever obeys.** "To obey is to develop this love by which we come to know Him and be like Him." Obedience is both the result and the proof of love. **This is how.** "Obedience is how we can know we live in fellowship with God!"

6. **Should live just as Jesus Christ did.** This is what *obedience* means. Compare *John 15:4* and note, also note on the third use of law at the end of *Rom. 3:31*.

The New Command

⁷My dear friends, this command I write you is not new; it is the old command, the one you have had from the very beginning. The old command is the message you have already heard. ⁸However, the command I write you is new, and its truth is seen in Christ and also in you. For the darkness is passing away, and the real light is already shining.

⁹Whoever says that he is in the light, yet hates his brother, is in the darkness to this very hour. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother stays in the light, and so there is nothing in him that will cause someone else to sin. ¹¹But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness; he walks in it and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has made him blind.

¹²I write to you, my children, because your sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ's name.

Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

7. **This command.** "When I tell you that by obeying the word of Christ, the love for God is made perfect in you, I am writing you an old command. Moses spoke it (*Deut. 18:15*), and God spoke it at Christ's baptism (*Matt. 3:17*) and transfiguration (*Matt. 17:5*). We have told you about this from the beginning." [Johnson connects this with *John 13:34-35*.]

8. **However.** "This command I write to you to live just as Jesus Christ did, is new. Its truth is seen in Christ as he laid down his life for men (mankind), and its truth is also seen in you as you live just as he did." For the darkness of paganism and Judaism is passing away, and the real light of Christ's teaching and example is already shining and teaches you to lay down your lives for your brothers (includes sisters] as He did.

9. **Yet hates his brother.** "He says this and thinks he is in the light, but he has never seen the light! It has never shone on him, and he still stands in darkness!" [This does not contradict *Luke 14:25*. Compare *John 12:25*.]

10. **Whoever loves his brother.** "This one not only sees the light, but stays in it!!!" And so there is nothing in him. *MacKnight* says: "Schismatics and heretics, on pretence of having attained to a greater knowledge of the truth, and a greater purity of conduct than others, think themselves authorized to hate and persecute those who differ from them in opinion and practice." John is saying that one who loves his brother will not act that way! [Johnson takes this as the NIV has translated it. The meaning does not change.]

11. **But whoever.** "The one who hates his brother is blind, and does not know he is blind. The darkness of sin and error prevents him from being able to see what is right, and it kills the good impulses which he might have. There is no neutral ground between love and hate. Love is actively doing good to others. Anything less than this is hate, just as indifference to the Good News is effective rejection of it (*Matt. 22:5-7*)."

12. **Because your sins are forgiven.** "You are not unbelievers and I do not mean to doubt the sincerity of your faith. It is because I know your sins are forgiven by the merit of Christ's name (see note on *Acts 2:38*), that I write to you."

¹³I write to you, fathers, because you know him who has existed from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have defeated the Evil One.

¹⁴I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who has existed from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong; the word of God lives in you and you have defeated the Evil One.

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything that belongs to the world. If you love the world, you do not have the love for the Father in you. ¹⁶Everything that belongs to the world—what the sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of—none of this comes from the Father; it all comes

I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.

I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Do Not Love the World

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and his pride in possessions—comes not from the Father but from

13. **Fathers.** "I write to you mature Christians (both men and women) because you do know the Eternal Jesus the Christ." **Young men.** "I write to you less-mature Christians (both men and women), because you have already defeated the Evil One and resisted apostasy from the faith."

14. **Children.** [The chapter and verse divisions date from the 16th century.] "I write to you new Christians (both men and women), because you know the Father and can say, 'Father, my Father' (*Rom. 8:15*)." **I write to you.** In the Hebrew idiom, John repeats what he has just said to emphasize it!

15. **Do not love the world.** Compare *James 4:4* and note. John does not mean our material universe, because this world is God's creation and is good (*Gen. 1:31; 1 Tim. 4:4*). Neither is it wicked people themselves, since God loves the world (*John 3:16*) of people whom he has created. John speaks of the world or cosmos of darkness!!! Human society is organized *against* God, and therefore against the Christian. Christians must be careful about their loyalties, and not allow themselves to oppose God! Compare *Rev. 13:14-18; 18:4* and notes. Everything belongs to the Christian and is his to use (*1 Cor. 3:21-23*), but the whole world becomes an *idol* for the one who does not **ACTIVELY LOVE** God!

16. **Everything.** John describes the *world* of *verse 15* to show what he means. **What the sinful self desires.** A passionate desire for forbidden things. *Augustine* thought it meant immoral desires. John does not mean our physical bodies or our natural desires. He means we sin when Satan tempts us to use these natural desires in evil ways. Compare *James 1:14-15; Gal. 5:16-18* and notes. **What people see and want.** Greed for luxury, houses, clothes, etc. The list is long! **That people are so proud of.** Boasting about titles, rank, power, wealth, etc. See how Christ described it in *Luke 18:9-12; Matt. 23:5-7*. These three factors can also be seen in the temptation of Jesus. See *Matt. 4:1-11* and notes.

from the world. ¹⁷The world and everything in it that men desire is passing away; but he who does what God wants lives forever.

The Enemy of Christ

¹⁸My children, the end is near! You were told that the Enemy of Christ would come; and now many enemies of Christ have already appeared, and so we know that the end is near. ¹⁹These people really did not belong to our group, and that is why they left us; if they had belonged to our group, they would have stayed with us. But they left so that it might be clear that none of them really belonged to our group.

²⁰But you have had the Holy Spirit poured out on you by Christ, and so all of you know the truth. ²¹I write you, then, not because you do not know the truth; instead, it is because you do know it, and also know that no lie ever comes from the truth.

the world. The world and its 17
desires pass away, but the
man who does the will of God
lives forever.

Warning Against Antichrists

Dear children, this is the 18
last hour; and as you have
heard that the antichrist is
coming, even now many anti-
christs have come. This is
how we know it is the last
hour. They went out from us, 19
but they did not really belong
to us. For if they had be-
longed to us, they would have
remained with us; but their
going showed that none of
them belonged to us.

But you have an anointing 20
from the Holy One, and all
of you know the truth. I do 21
not write to you because you
do not know the truth, but
because you do know it and
because no lie comes from

17. **Is passing away.** This is the cycle of Babylon that we see in *Rev. ch 18*. See notes there. Those who make the things of this world their "god" are doomed to failure! Wealth, power, fame, honor, and such things, are all passing away continuously. People hoard money, and inflation steals its value. See *Luke 16:1-9* and notes. **But he who does.** "You find eternal life by making yourself a living sacrifice to God!" See *Rom. 12:1-2* and notes.

18. **The end is near!** We find this sort of statement made again and again in the New Testament. We live in the *last days* (*Acts 2:17* and note), but these have been continuing for almost two thousand years now. What John and the others are saying, is that we live in a "*last-hour situation*," where it is possible that Jesus might come at any moment! **The Enemy of Christ.** The NIV uses the word *antichrist*, but this word has been distorted by popular usage. Note that John says *many have already appeared* at the time he writes this!!! Compare what Paul said in *2 Thess. 2:5-12* and notes. **The end is near.** John was *inspired*, and it is unlikely he would expect the Lord to come in his lifetime. What John must have in mind is the *cycle of Armageddon* (*Rev. 11:4-14* and notes).

19. **These people.** Note that *each* of these is an *enemy of Christ* (antichrist). It may be that these people were never really genuine Christians, or it may be that they once actually held the faith they now renounce (compare *Heb. 6:4-6; 1 John 5:16-17*). It is plain that they did not LOVE Jesus, and that they left Christ of their own free will. Compare *1 Tim. 1:19-20; 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Jude; Rev. 2:6, 14, 15, 20*. **So that it might be clear.** See Paul's statement in *1 Cor. 11:19*.

20. **But you have had.** All genuine Christians are Spirit-filled (but not all have miraculous powers). See *2 Cor. 1:21-22; Acts 5:32; Rom. 8:26* and notes. Some of those to whom John writes would have the miraculous gift of being able to identify what was true from what was false (*1 Cor. 12:10*). We have God's Word in written form to measure and identify *truth*. See also note on *Heb. 10:29*.

21. **I write to you, then.** "I am writing this to you, not because you are ignorant of the life of the Logos in human form, but because you do know it! You also know that none of the lies being taught by the false teachers about Christ, form any part of the TRUTH of the Good News."

²²Who, then, is the liar? It is he who says that Jesus is not the Christ. This one is the Enemy of Christ—he rejects both the Father and the Son. ²³For whoever rejects the Son also rejects the Father; whoever accepts the Son has the Father also.

²⁴Be sure, then, to keep in your hearts the message you heard from the beginning. If you keep what you heard from the beginning, then you will always live in union with the Son and the Father. ²⁵And this is what Christ himself promised to give us—eternal life.

²⁶I write you this about those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷But as for you, Christ has poured out his Spirit on you. As long as his Spirit remains in you, you do not need anyone to teach you. For his Spirit teaches you about everything, and what he teaches is true, not false. Obey the Spirit's teaching, then, and remain in Christ.

the truth. Who is the liar? It ²²
is the man who denies that
Jesus is the Christ. Such a
man is the antichrist—he
denies the Father and the
Son. No one who denies the ²³
Son has the Father; whoever
acknowledges the Son has
the Father also.

See that what you have ²⁴
heard from the beginning re-
mains in you. If it does, you
also will remain in the Son
and in the Father. And this ²⁵
is what he promised us—
even eternal life.

I am writing these things ²⁶
to you about those who are
trying to lead you astray. As ²⁷
for you, the anointing you
received from him remains
in you, and you do not need
anyone to teach you. But as
his anointing teaches you a-
bout all things and as that
anointing is real, not count-
erfeit—just as it has taught
you, remain in him.

22. Who, then, is the liar? "You can very easily tell who it is that is lying about Jesus Christ the Messiah!!! It is the one who says that Jesus was *only human*, and not *the Christ!*" (See Introduction to this Letter.) **This one.** "Whoever refuses to believe what the Father said about the Son. (*1 John 5:6* and note), *that the man Jesus is the Son*, is the Enemy of Christ!!!" If we believe John, there is not *one* Antichrist, but *many Antichrists!!!* Everyone who denies the reality of the Logos coming as a human being is an Antichrist! **He rejects both.** "The one who says Jesus was only human and not divine, is rejecting the Father as well!!!"

23. For whoever. "Some reject the Son and claim to have the Father. This cannot be true! If you reject the Son, you have also rejected the Father who sent Him!!!" **Whoever accepts.** "If you accept the Son, you have also accepted the Father who sent Him!!!"

24. To keep in your hearts. "Be sure to hold firm the truth we taught you about the Logos becoming a human being (*John 1:14*). In doing this you will keep your fellowship with the Father and the Son (*1 John 1:7*)."

25. And this is what. "You will find great happiness and jubilation in that *fellowship*, because *Christ* Jesus himself promised to give us *eternal life!!!*"

26. I write you this. "I want to warn you about the Enemies of Christ. Be on your guard against them!!! They want to steal your promise!!!"

27. But as for you. This verse does not teach a *continuous revelation* (see *Heb. 1:1-2* and notes), nor that we are to be led by an *inner light*. It teaches that God makes available a *means* for us to know what is in fact the truth! Some had a gift from the Spirit (see notes on *verse 20*), and we have the Scriptures. They are the Spirit's message to us!! We obey the Spirit by obeying the New Testament which He produced.

²⁸Yes, my children, remain in him, so that we may be full of courage when he appears and need not hide in shame from him on the Day he comes.

²⁹You know that Christ is righteous; you should know, then, that everyone who does what is right is God's child.

Children of God

3 See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children—and so, in fact, we are. This is why the world does not know us: it has not known God. ²My dear friends, we are now God's children, but it is not yet clear what we shall become. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall become like him, because we shall see him as he really is. ³Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure.

⁴Whoever sins is guilty of breaking God's law;

Children of God

And now, dear children, ²⁸ continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

If you know that he is ²⁹ righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

3 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are ² children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone ³ who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Everyone who sins breaks ⁴ the law; in fact, sin is law-

28. Remain in him. "Do not make the mistake of abandoning Christ!!! Remain in Him and in the Good News, so that we, your teachers, may be full of courage about your salvation when He appears on the Day He comes to judge the world!!!!"

29. You know. "You already know that Christ is righteous. Doing what is right, then, is proof that we are God's child!!!!" See note on *verse 3*. The abrupt movement from *Christ is righteous* to *God's child* shows John's sense of the *oneness* of the Father and the Son. See *John 10:30* and note. See also note on *Rom. 16:27*. The apostles were "Monotheistic-Trinitarians."

1. The Father has loved us! *Christ-on-the-cross* is the declaration of God's love for us (*John 3:16*)!!! "See how much the Father has loved us Jews and Gentiles who do what is right (*1 John 2:29*)! We are God's children!" **This is why.** "The world knows the children of the pagan gods, but the world will not admit that we are God's children, because the world does not know God! The world does not understand the nature and character of God!"

2. We are now God's children. "The world may hate us and persecute us, but even now we are already God's children!" **But it is not yet clear.** "We have not been told the details of our future glory. We could not now understand it, since it must be experienced to be understood!" **But we know.** "We know that when Christ comes to judge the world (*1 John 2:28*), we shall become like him (*Phil. 3:20-21*), because we shall see him as he really is, and shall live with him forever!!!!" (1) To see God is to be like Him! *Matt. 5:8* and note. (2) To see God *transfigures*, even in this life (*2 Cor. 3:18*). [Compare note on *1 John 2:29*.]

3. Everyone. "Everyone who has this hope of seeing God and of becoming like Him (*John 17:24*) and of living with Him forever, keeps himself pure." Compare *verse 8*.

4. Whoever sins. Some said God did not count sin against one who believed in Him. (See Introduction to this Letter.) John is talking about a continuous action. "One who continues to sin is breaking God's law, and will be severely punished for it (if he does not turn away from his sins), no matter what the false teachers may tell you!" **Because sin is.** All sin is a breaking of God's law, whether it is one sin or a continuous action. Sin is lawlessness! (See notes on *Law, Rom. 3:31*.)

because sin is a breaking of the law. ⁵You know that Christ appeared in order to take away men's sins, and that there is no sin in him. ⁶So everyone who lives in Christ does not continue to sin; but whoever continues to sin has never seen him or known him.

⁷Let no one deceive you, children! Whoever does what is right is righteous, just as Christ is righteous. ⁸Whoever continues to sin belongs to the Devil, because the Devil has sinned from the very beginning. The Son of God appeared for this very reason, to destroy the Devil's works.

⁹Whoever is a child of God does not continue to sin, because God's very nature is in him; and because God is his Father, he cannot continue to sin. ¹⁰Here is the clear difference between God's children and the Devil's children: anyone who does not do what is right, or does not love his brother, is not God's child.

5 lessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother.

5. **You know.** "The very reason that Christ appeared in human form was for the purpose of taking away men's sins! This shows how certain punishment is if you purposely go on sinning!" **There is no sin in him.** "This proves he does not allow us to continue to sin! We are like him when we quit sinning!"

6. **Does not continue to sin.** Both the TEV and the NIV bring out the fact that the Greek uses the *present continuous tense*. All Christians sin on the spur of the moment (1 John 1:8-10). But Christians do not purposely go on sinning continuously!!! See verse 9. **But whoever continues.** "The one who makes a habit of sin has never really seen Him, even though he may have seen Christ as a human being, and does not know either His character or His will, as the Holy One!"

7. **Let no one deceive you!** "Do not let the false teachers fool you with their talk that merely believing will make you righteous even though you go on sinning!" **Whoever does.** "It is the one who makes a habit of doing what is right who has the same righteous character that Christ has!"

8. **Whoever continues to sin.** "The one who purposely makes a habit of sin shows by this that he belongs to the Devil (see verse 12)." **Because the Devil has sinned.** This is in the *present continuous tense*, which shows the Devil has been continuously sinning all during human history, as he tempts people to sin! **The Son of God appeared.** This is why the Logos had to come in human form: to destroy the Devil's works (sin and punishment, verse 5). He did this through his DEATH (Heb. 2:14).

9. **Does not continue to sin.** Again the *present continuous*. See note on verse 6. **Because God's very nature.** MacKnight thinks this is true of the word that lives in us (1 Pet. 1:23). It is also true of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 8:15). **He cannot continue to sin.** "In becoming God's child, we have died to sin! Even though it is true that we do commit single acts of sin, we cannot continue to sin as a habit! God is our Father and we share his moral nature! His divine nature in us makes sin an impossible choice for us!" Compare 2 Pet. 1:3-4; Rom. 6:1-4.

10. **Here is the clear difference.** This is the same as the *old command* of 1 John 2:7-11. Actions clearly identify the loyalty of a person!!! **Anyone who does not.** "Failing to do right and failing to love fellow-man, identifies a person as one of the Devil's children." [In this John is scolding those who said God did not count sin against a Christian.]

Love One Another

¹¹The message you heard from the very beginning is this: we must love one another. ¹²We must not be like Cain; he belonged to the Evil One, and murdered his own brother. Why did Cain murder him? Because the things he did were wrong, but the things his brother did were right.

¹³So do not be surprised, my brothers, if the people of the world hate you. ¹⁴We know that we have left death and come over into life; we know it because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love is still in death. ¹⁵Whoever hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that a murderer does not have eternal life in him. ¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers! ¹⁷If a man is rich and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he has love for

Love One Another

This is the message you ¹¹ heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who ¹² belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if ¹³ the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his ¹⁵ brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

This is how we know what ¹⁶ love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone ¹⁷ has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

11. **From the very beginning.** "The message of the Good News does not change!!! The message originally announced is still in effect (*Gal. 1:6-9*). New and esoteric teaching about faith and morals disqualifies itself by its very newness!!" **We must love one another.** This is Jesus' new commandment (*John 13:34-35*). It is new in *kind*, because it is the kind of love which Jesus has for us!

12. **Like Cain.** Cain is an example of *hate*. The Greek says literally that Cain *butchered* his own brother! **Because.** "The *bad* in Cain caused him to hate the *good* in his brother!" Compare *John 3:20; 8:44; Matt. 5:21-22*.

13. **So do not be surprised.** "The *world* to which Cain belonged (*1 John 2:15-17*) still belongs to Satan. As Cain hated his righteous brother, so this same *world* will hate you." Those who made a *habit* of sin were making themselves part of this *world*.

14. **We know.** "The *world* is death! We Christians have left death and come over into life! The proof of this is the love we have for our brothers (fellowman)! Whoever does not *love* proves he is still in *death*!"

15. **Whoever hates.** "As a plant cannot be both growing and dying at the same time, so a Christian cannot be both loving and hating. When the *light* came into the *world*, it caused a *crisis*! There is no NEUTRAL GROUND!!!" Compare *Matt. 5:21-22*. Hate (*lack of love*) is a serious matter!!

16. **What love is.** "Christ *acted out* this LOVE by giving his life for us. Rather than hating and destroying our brother, we ought to have the spirit of Christ and lay down our lives for our brothers, when called upon to do so."

17. **Yet closes his heart.** "Let me show you this practical example. If we love as Christ loved us, how can we refuse to help others???" It is easy to be a martyr and die as a hero for Christ. The difficult part is the little things of day-to-day living, the trivial sacrifices and self-denials that no one sees and applauds.

God in his heart? ¹⁸My children! Our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.

Courage before God

¹⁹This, then is how we will know that we belong to the truth. This is how our hearts will be confident in God's presence. ²⁰If our heart condemns us, we know that God is greater than our heart, and that he knows everything. ²¹And so, my dear friends, if our heart does not condemn us, we have courage in God's presence. ²²We receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. ²³This is what he commands: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another

Dear children, let us not love ¹⁸ with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know ¹⁹ that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever ²⁰ our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Dear friends, if our hearts ²¹ do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and ²² receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his ²³ command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded

18. **It must be true love.** Talk is cheap! See what James says in *James 2:14-17*. James says *faith*; John says *love*! It is good to *talk*, but we must back it up with *action*!

19. **This, then.** "Only by this kind of behavior, *acting out our love*, can we know that we belong to the truth and the fellowship of the Father and the Son." **Will be confident.** No need to be ashamed! See *1 John 2:28*.

20. **If our heart condemns us.** It is best to make this part of the same thought as *verse 19*. *J. W. Roberts* thinks this is so. "Our heart condemns us because of our acts of sin (*see note on 1 John 2:1*), and we ask in fear, 'Am I loving as I ought to do???' The fact that we are acting out our love will give us confidence. It is a paradox that only as we do see that *Jesus paid it all (Rom. 8:1-4 and notes)* will we be *set free* to make our lives a living sacrifice in praise to God!!!" (1) God knows the worst that is in us and still loves us! What the Christian learns about himself when he tries to be holy, God knew all along! (2) God knows everything, and He sometimes gives us credit for our good intentions. See *1 Kings 8:18-19*.

21. **If our heart does not condemn us.** "If the fact that we *love* will quiet the fears of our hearts, even though we see our mistakes; how much more courage will we have in God's presence if we live so that our hearts do not condemn us!!! If our love shows itself in actions, we will have more courage when we go to God in prayer."

22. **We receive from him.** "Doing what is right and having a heart that does not condemn us are *two sides of the same coin*. Because we are his children, he hears and answers our prayers." Compare *Prov. 15:29; Psalm 66:18-19; Job 27:8-9; Isa. 1:11-15*.

23. **This is what he commands.** John has been stressing actions. Here he shows us faith and love as *two sides of the same coin*. See note on *James 2:19*. **Believe in the name.** *Name = authority*. To believe in *his name* means to believe in everything that his name symbolizes and stands for. **Just as Christ commanded us.** See *1 John 4:21; Matt. 22:34-40*.

other, just as Christ commanded us. ²⁴Whoever obeys God's commands lives in God and God lives in him. And this is how we know that God lives in us: we know it because of the Spirit he has given us.

The True and the False Spirit

4 My dear friends: do not believe all who claim to have the Spirit, but test them to find out if the spirit they have comes from God. For many false prophets have gone out everywhere. ²This is how you will be able to know whether it is God's Spirit: anyone who declares that Jesus Christ came as a human being has the Spirit who comes from God. ³But anyone who denies this about Jesus does not have the Spirit from God. This spirit is from the Enemy of Christ; you heard that it would come, and now it is here in the world already.

us. Those who obey his ²⁴ commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Test the Spirits

4 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how ² you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit ³ that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

24. Whoever obeys. See *John 14:21-23* and notes. **Because of the Spirit.** Every Christian has the Spirit (*Acts 5:32*). John sees this as a fact of experience that can be used as a proof. Obedience identifies the Spirit within us (*Gal. 5:22-23*). The presence of the Spirit was a strong reason for the Jewish Christian to hold firm to Christ (see *Heb. 10:29* and note). But the experience of the Spirit is easily misused (see *1 Cor. ch 12-14*). John looks at this in the next chapter.

1. Do not believe . . . but test. In *1 John 3:24* John mentions the evidence of the Spirit. Because the false teachers all claimed to be inspired and to have received their (false) message from the Holy Spirit, John reminds the messianic community that they have among them some who can *tell the difference* (*1 Cor. 12:10; 1 John 2:27*) and *identify* those who are in fact inspired teachers. **For many false prophets.** His warning is still good today! See *1 Thess. 5:19-22*.

2. This is how. "Even you who do not have this *gift from the Spirit* will be able to recognize which teachers do come from God." **Anyone who declares.** Two things are here: (1) Anyone who would use the name *Jesus Christ* is by that identifying Jesus with the Logos. (2) To declare Jesus Christ came as a human being is to identify the Logos with Jesus. [See Introduction to this Letter.] *Moffatt* translates this: "*Every spirit which confesses Jesus as the Christ incarnate comes from God.*"

3. But anyone who denies this. "Anyone who says Jesus was human but not divine, or that says He was divine but not human, does not speak by means of God's Spirit!" **Enemy of Christ.** *MacKnight* takes this as meaning The Devil, who is the ultimate source of all opposition to Christ. It was the Devil who motivated the false teachers to teach the things they taught. **You heard that it would come.** Paul spoke about this (*2 Thess. 2:3*). The Mysterious Wickedness was already at work when Paul wrote. John identifies the spirit from the Enemy of Christ as *in the world already* as he writes. Compare note on *Rev. 13:11*.

⁴But you belong to God, my children, and have defeated the false prophets; because the Spirit who is in you is more powerful than the spirit in those who belong to the world. ⁵They speak about matters of the world and the world listens to them because they belong to the world. ⁶But we belong to God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever does not belong to God does not listen to us. This is the way, then, that we can tell the difference between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God Is Love

⁷Dear friends! Let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love for us: he sent his only Son into the world that we might have

You, dear children, are ⁴ from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

God's Love and Ours

Dear friends, let us love ⁷ one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live

4. **But you belong to God.** "You belong to God and allow Him to teach you!" **And have defeated.** "You have discovered and defeated these false teachers, because you have God's Truth!" **Because the Spirit.** "All false teachers have the spirit from the Enemy of Christ. You have the Holy Spirit from God!!! As God is INFINITELY more powerful than the Devil, so the Spirit of Truth is more powerful than the spirit from the Enemy of Christ!"

5. **About matters of the world.** Compare *1 John 3:12*. "Do not be discouraged by the success of the false teachers. They tell the world what it wants to hear!" See *1-Tim. 4:14; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-4*.

6. **But we belong to God.** "We have nothing to do with the world that follows the Enemy of Christ." **Whoever knows God.** "The one who does in fact *know God* listens to what we apostles say, and teaches the same things which we teach. The one who *does not know God* rejects us and our message." **This is the way.** We have in written form all that the apostles taught (the New Testament). Those who hear and do what they taught, follow the Spirit of truth. Those who reject what they taught, follow the spirit of error which comes from the Enemy of Christ. Compare *John 8:42-47*.

7. **Because love comes from God.** "The false teachers claim knowledge is all that is necessary to please God, and they do not love one another. Love grown cold is a sign of evil (*Matt. 24:12*). Therefore, because love comes from God, let us love one another!" **Whoever loves.** John uses a *continuous form* for 'loves.' "Love is God's very nature, and those who love share the divine nature (*2 Pet. 1:4*); and as they continue to love, they *get to know God* more and more!!!"

8. **Whoever does not love.** "One who is a *stranger* to love, is a *stranger* to God also!" Compare *1 Cor. 2:9* and note.

9. **This is how God.** "God showed his love for us by **ACTING IN HISTORY!** See *John 3:16*."

life through him. ¹⁰This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

¹¹Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made perfect in us.

¹³This is how we are sure that we live in God and he lives in us: he has given us his Spirit.

¹⁴And we have seen and tell others that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

¹⁵Whoever declares that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him, and he lives in God. ¹⁶And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us.

God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in God and God lives in him. ¹⁷The purpose of love being made perfect in us is that we may have courage on Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as

through him. This is love: 10 not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, 11 since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; 12 but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

We know that we live in 13 him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify 14 that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowl- 15 edges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know 16 and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. Love is made com- 17 plete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

10. **This is what love is.** "This is the example for us to follow. God did not wait for us to love him first (verse 19), but while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8) God sent his Son to be the means (1 John 2:2) by which our sins are forgiven."

11. **If this is how.** "If God could set such an example (verse 10), then we who belong to God must imitate Him by loving one another!!!" Christian love is treating others as God has treated us through Christ.

12. **No one has ever seen God.** John 1:18. "Some may claim to have seen God in a vision or to have heard Him speak to them. But in fact, no one has ever seen God! But Jesus, the Son, has told us about Him. The only actual proof that God lives in us (Eph. 2:22), or that his love is made perfect in us (1 John 2:5), is that we love one another!"

13. **He has given us his Spirit.** John may be thinking of the miraculous gifts from the Spirit, but what he has been saying about love connects this with Gal. 5:22-23. Every Christian is Spirit-filled (Acts 5:32). But one who does not love, shows he does not have the Spirit!

14. **That the Father sent his Son.** John speaks as an eye-witness! See John 15:27; 1 John 1:1-4.

15. **Whoever declares.** Compare verse 2. Such faith implies fellowship with God! Compare 1 Tim. 6:12; Matt. 16:16; Rom. 10:9-10. "God lives in the one who declares his faith in Jesus as the Christ incarnate."

16. **And we ourselves know.** The apostles saw Christ-on-the-cross! They believe (see note on James 2:19) God's love! John's language points to a knowledge and belief that began in the past and continues up to the present (and will continue in the future). Unless you believe that the Logos came as a human being to be the Savior of the world, you cannot understand God's *unique* love!!

17. **The purpose.** "Love is an official heavenly visitor who stays with us and claims our loyalty. Love has been 'made perfect in us' when we are *facsimiles* of Jesus - His visible *portrait!*" Compare Matt. 5:16; Gal. 2:20.

Christ's. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in the one who fears, because fear has to do with punishment.

¹⁹We love because God first loved us. ²⁰If someone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar. For he cannot love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen. ²¹This, then, is the command that Christ gave us: he who loves God must love his brother also.

Our Victory over the World

5 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is a child of God; and whoever loves a father loves his child also. ²This is how we know that we love God's children: it is by loving God and obey-

There is no fear in love. But ¹⁸ perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love because he, first ¹⁹ loved us. If anyone says, "I ²⁰ love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has ²¹ given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Faith in the Son of God

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we ² know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his com-

18. No fear in love. Note that John uses *fear* as the opposite of *love*. One type of person lost eternally is the *coward* (fearful), as we see in *Rev. 21:8*. [*We fear* God in the sense of reverence and respect.] "Fear of punishment never goes along with love; but perfect love to God and man drives out all fear of punishment from our mind! One who truly loves God and man will know that he has left death and come over into life (*1 John 3:14*), and will have no reason to fear punishment!" **Love has not been made perfect.** "The one who fears the Judgment has not been made perfect in love to God and man! For this he has no excuse!" *Bengel* says there are four possible conditions of a human soul: (1) without either fear or love; (2) with fear, without love; (3) with fear and love; (4) with love, without fear. This verse shows that only the *fourth* describes the *true (mature) Christian!*

19. Because God. God's unique love for us in Christ, fills us with love for Him and for our fellowman!

20. But hates his brother. "Hating his brother shows he was a liar when he said, 'I love God!'" Some thought it proper to show their love for God by hating and persecuting all who did not share their views in religious matters. See note on *James 3:9*. *We limit our love for God, by our love for our brother!!*

21. Is the command. It is God's will that he who loves the Father should love the children also! See *John 13:34-35; 15:12; 1 John 3:11*. *You cannot obey the command to love God without loving your brother!!*

1. Whoever believes. For the meaning of *faith*, see note on *James 2:19*. Faith reaches out to seize the sacrifice of Christ (*Acts 2:38* and note). **Whoever loves a father.** This is another way of saying: love for God = love for brothers (fellow Christians).

2. This is how. John has just pointed out that if we love a father, we will love his child also. Love for the child grows out of love for the father. Therefore love for our brothers (fellow Christians) really grows out of our love for The Father, and this demonstrates its *reality* by obeying His commands, one of which is *to love one another!*

ing his commands. ³For our love for God means that we obey his commands. And his commands are not too hard for us, ⁴because every child of God is able to defeat the world. This is how we win the victory over the world: with our faith. ⁵Who can defeat the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

mands. This is love for God: ³ to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone ⁴ born of God has overcome the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that ⁵ overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

The Witness about Jesus Christ

⁶Jesus Christ is the one who came; he came with the water of his baptism and the blood of his death. He came not only with the water, but with both the water and the blood. And the Spirit himself testifies that this is true, because

This is the one who came ⁶ by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the

3. Means that we obey. See *John 14:23* and note. We cannot divorce *faith* from *action* (*James 2:22*). Are not too hard. *MacKnight* says: "To a good man in ordinary circumstances, the keeping of God's commandments is easy, being the delight of his soul." But we should carry this farther, since God's promise is that whatever comes our way will be within our limitations (*1 Cor. 10:13*), and we do have a promise of help when we ask for it (*Phil. 4:13; Eph. 3:16-17*).

4. Because. Old and young, Jew and Gentile, men and women, slave and free, - all who are NEW in Christ are able to defeat the world and resist its temptations to break God's law!!! See *John 3:3,6* and notes. This is how: The power of faith to make people able to overcome the world is clearly shown in *Heb. 11*. *MacDonald* writes: "Every common day, he who would be a live child of the living has to fight the God-denying look of things, to believe that, in spite of their look, they are God's and God is in them, and working his saving will in them." This is one of the themes of Revelation (see Introduction to Revelation).

5. Only he. John's teaching is: that faith in the Logos coming as a human being to be the means to set men free from sin, guilt, and punishment - makes easy the commands of God! Only he (or she) who firmly believes this will be able to conquer the world!!! If you deny the full truth of the Incarnation (Logos becoming human), you rob yourself of the power which the Good News brings with it, which will make you able to defeat the world!!!

6. Jesus Christ. John expands what he said in *verse 5*. Some taught that Jesus was completely human, and that *The Christ* came down on him at his baptism and left him before his death (see Introduction to this Letter). In saying *Jesus Christ*, John is saying they were not two discrete personalities, but one fusion of the Logos as a human being! The one who came. John points back to the *Christ of History!!!* The First Coming is now a historical event (*Gal. 4:4-5*). Water of his baptism. The TEV brings out the true meaning here. John wants to prove the Jesus of the Gospels is The Christ, The Son of God. It was no make-believe!!! The Logos as a human being passed through these physical experiences!!! At his baptism, Jesus Christ was publicly identified for his work of "buying men for God." See *John 1:29-34*. The blood of his death. If Jesus were only human, his death would mean nothing! But as Jesus the Christ, His death was and is the FULFILLMENT of HIS INFINITE SACRIFICE!!! See *Heb. 2:14; 9:12,26*. Not only with the water. John repeats this to make it stronger!!! And the Spirit. The people to whom John wrote knew that the Holy Spirit had testified to the truth of what he is saying in many ways (by miracles, gifts, etc.). The Spirit cannot lie. [We are baptized into Christ's death (*Rom. 6:3-5*); and the Lord's Supper (Holy Meal) points to the blood of His death (*1 Cor. 11:23-26*).]

the Spirit is truth. ⁷There are three witnesses, ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and all three agree. ⁹We believe the witness that men give; the witness that God gives is much stronger, and this is the witness that God has given about his Son. ¹⁰So whoever believes in the Son of God has this witness in his heart; but whoever does not believe God has made a liar out of him, because he has not believed what God has said as a witness about his Son. ¹¹This, then, is the witness: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has this life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Eternal Life

¹³I write you this so that you may know that you have eternal life—you that believe in the

Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have

7. **There are three witnesses.** Two witnesses would establish the truth. John says there are three!!! [A footnote in the NIV says: "Late MSS of the Vulgate add *in heaven; the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that testify on earth.*" It has been proved that these words are spurious (not genuine), and could not have been a part of the original text. The Expositor's Greek Testament, et. al., discuss this thoroughly.]

8. **And all three agree.** The notes on *verse 6* show how they give their witness. The false teachers who claim that Jesus is not The Christ are to be examined in view of the *witness* which the Spirit, the water, and the blood *all agree upon!!! All three agree* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Eternal Logos who became a human being!!!

9. **We believe.** "If we are willing to believe the witness men give to establish the truth, how much more should we believe the witness that God gives about his Son!!!" **That God has given.** God's witness is a matter of record (*John 8:18* and note).

10. **So whoever believes.** "If you believe God's witness to his Son, you believe in the Son of God (Jesus the Christ). You have this witness in your heart because you have reached out through faith to seize Christ and make yourself part of him!!!" **But whoever does not believe.** "If you do not believe, you are calling God a liar, because you have rejected the truth he declared about his Son!!!"

11. **Is the witness.** "This is the *truth* which God has declared: He *has given* (made available in Christ-on-the-cross) us eternal life, and this life is in His Son!!!" [Christ-on-the-cross includes the *entire historical Jesus.*]

12. **Whoever has the Son.** "Since *life is in the Son* (*Acts 4:12* and note), you must have the Son to have life!!! To have the Son you must reach out through faith to seize Him and make yourself part of His sacrifice!!!" See *Acts 2:40* and note. **Whoever does not have.** "Since *life is in the Son*, whoever does not have Him, does not have life!!!"

13. **So that you may know.** "I write this so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (Logos as a human being) as I mentioned in *John 20:31*; but even more than this, I write so that you may know that you do have eternal life!" Confidence is necessary to fight against defeatism and certain false doctrines. Note how John's proof progresses: *1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:13-14; 4:12-13; 5:11-12. In the name.* See *Matt. 28:19; Acts 4:12* and notes. The *name* includes everything that Jesus is, was, and has done.

name of the Son of God. ¹⁴We have courage in God's presence because we are sure that he hears us if we ask him for anything that is according to his will. ¹⁵He hears us whenever we ask him; since we know this is true, we know also that he gives us what we ask from him.

¹⁶If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray to God, who will give him life. This applies to those whose sins do not lead to death. But there is sin which leads to death, and I do not say that you should pray to God about that. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which does not lead to death.

¹⁸We know that no child of God keeps on sinning, because the Son of God keeps him safe, and the Evil One cannot harm him.

eternal life. We have this ¹⁴ assurance in approaching God, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know ¹⁵ that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Concluding Remarks

If anyone sees his brother ¹⁶ commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and ¹⁷ there is sin that does not lead to death.

We know that anyone ¹⁸ born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one does not

14. **We have courage.** Compare *Heb. 4:16* and note. God is our Father if we are his child!!! According to his will. (1) We should always pray: "Your will be done!" See the example in *Matt. 26:39* and note. (2) The promise is not: "He will do it," but "He will hear us!" God will answer in His own way. Compare *Acts 28:16* and note.

15. **Since we know this is true.** This expands the second qualification in *verse 14*, Jesus said the same thing in *Mark 11:24*. We are limited in what we pray for by our lack of knowledge (*Rom. 8:26*). Our confidence is that God will not give what we ask, but what we really need! But we know God does hear us!!! Compare *Rev. 8:1-5* and notes.

16. **Commit a sin.** John is writing to preserve the fellowship of the messianic community (church). Not only should Christians be aware of the *material needs* of their brothers (includes sisters), they should also be aware of *spiritual needs*. As it is right to pray for the sick to get well (*James 5:15* and note), so it is also proper to pray for the forgiveness of one who sins. Christians ought to pray for each other. John divides *sin* into two types: (1) do not lead to death (*Gal. 6:1*); (2) do lead to death (*Heb. 6:4-6*). Christians are to pray for others who fall into the first class of sin. **And I do not say.** "There are some who have gone so far into apostasy that it will no longer be possible to restore them to Christ. I do not say that you should pray to God for such as these, because they refuse to repent and go on sinning." See *Matt. 12:31-32*; *Rev. 15:8* and notes. *Doddridge* says: "Let us not too soon pronounce the case of a sinner hopeless; but rather subject ourselves to the trouble of some fruitless attempts to reclaim him, than omit anything where there may be a possibility of succeeding."

17. **All wrongdoing is sin.** All sin is a serious matter and not to be taken lightly!!! **But there is sin.** "The Christian with sin on his hands comes confidently to his Father and asks to have it forgiven!!! But the one who has in effect repudiated Christ, seeing sin on his hands, goes away in fear and hates God for his misery! Compare *Rev. 16:8-11* for an example of those who will not repent."

18. **We know.** "The child of God may fall into sin, but he does not keep on sinning! Sin has no power over him! Why??? Because the Son of God keeps him safe from the Evil One!!! See *Psalms 105*. But our security in Christ is contingent on our staying in fellowship with the Father and the Son (*1 John 1:7*). We do have the *option* of breaking that fellowship (*verse 16*).

¹⁹We know that we belong to God even though the whole world is under the rule of the Evil One.

²⁰We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we know the true God. Our lives are in the true God—in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and this is eternal life.

²¹My children, keep yourselves safe from false gods!

touch him. We know that we ¹⁹ are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the ²⁰ Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Dear children, keep your- ²¹ selves from idols.

19. **We know.** See *Col. 1:13* and note. "Even though the Evil One holds the whole world in his grasp, we have escaped through Christ!!! We know that we belong to God because we are now safe in the kingdom of his dear Son!!! Evidence of this is the fact that we do not keep on sinning, as those of the world do!!!"

20. **We know.** Not *came*, but *has come* and *has given us*. The Eternal Logos *has come* as a human being!!! The world can never be the same, because this fact *stands in history* and nothing can take it away!!! God *spoke* to us through his Son (*Heb. 1:2* and note), and this *understanding* will never be removed from the human scene!!! **The true God.** Jesus revealed the true God!!! Contrast this with the *false god* of the false teachers (*1 John 2:8*). See Introduction to Acts. **Our lives.** Again the emphasis that we are in the true God by being in his Son Jesus Christ. See *1 John 2:23* and note. **This is the true God.** In Christ the true God is revealed to us and in Christ we have eternal life!!! [Some think this says that Jesus Christ is the true God. A *monotheistic-trinitarian* can say this is true (see note on *Rom. 16:27*).]

21. **Keep yourselves safe.** The *false gods* were probably not idols such as were at Ephesus and Athens. John is certainly speaking about the false ideas of God which the false teachers substituted for the *picture of God* which Christ gives us in what he says. Compare *Gal. 1:6-9*. But it could be that the false teachers encouraged their followers to join in the worship of idols (compare *Rev. 2:14,20* and notes). The Christian who follows false gods puts himself in the Devil's power!!!

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND LETTER OF JOHN

There is no doubt that the Second and Third Letters of John are from the same writer. Also they show strong evidence in thought and language which link them to the First Letter of John. Compare *1 John 2:7* with *2 John 5*; *1 John 2:18*; *4:1-3* with *2 John 7*; *1 John 2:23* with *2 John 9*; *1 John 3:6, 9* with *3 John 11*.

The false teachers mentioned in *1 John 2:18-29* were imitating the evangelists (see note on *Eph. 4:11*) whom John was sending out (see note on *3 John 5-8*). These false evangelists were going from place to place and victimizing the churches of Christ. John warns the Lady not to show hospitality to these false teachers (which she can identify because they will not declare The Christ came as a human being). John makes it plain that Christian love is not intended to encourage or help those who are motivated by the spirit of the Enemy of Christ!!!

John must have written many such letters, as he supervised the messianic community (congregations) in a way that only an *apostle* had the authority to do. Such short letters as Second and Third John might have been ignored, if it were not for the fact that they came from John, the loved apostle. John probably wrote from Ephesus to churches in the area, and the time is probably the last decade of the first century.

THE SECOND LETTER OF JOHN

¹From the Elder—

To the dear Lady and to her children, whom I truly love. I am not the only one, but all who know the truth love you, ²because the truth remains in us and will be with us forever.

³May God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, give us grace, mercy, and peace; may they be ours in truth and love.

Truth and Love

⁴How happy I was to find that some of your children live in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵And so I ask you, dear Lady: let us all love one another. This is no new command I write you; it is the command which we have had from the beginning. ⁶This love I speak of means that we must live in obedience to God's commands. The command, as you have all heard from the beginning, is this: you must all live in love.

The Elder

To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth—because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

It has given me great joy to find some of your children living by the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we live in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you live a life of love.

1. **From the Elder.** *Elder* was often used as a *title of respect*, and it is the aged John the apostle who so speaks of himself here. **To the dear Lady.** Women played a larger part in the first century church than they often are given credit for. See Lydia (*Acts 16:40*), Nymphia (*Col. 4:15*), etc. [No one knows for sure whether Lady (*Kyria*) is a title or a name, or whether this is a real woman, or whether John speaks of the church as a *dear Lady*. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* takes *Kyria* as a real woman.] **Who know the truth.** John's love for this Lady and her children is in their common fellowship in the Truth of Christ!

2. **Because the truth.** Compare *John 15:16-17*. John is confident that the truth will be with us forever, that is *available forever*, and he is confident that the truth will remain in all who love the truth for what it is.

3. **May God.** This is John's word of blessing, from both God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. **May they be ours.** See *1 John 2:24*.

4. **How happy.** "I talked with some of your children, and I was happy to find they live in the truth of love!" John writes to warn the Lady about false teachers. It would be a pleasant surprise for him to meet faithful Christians, after battling with the other kind. **The Father commanded.** "The commandment is Love; Love is living according to His commandments; His commandments are summed up in Love!"

5. **And so I ask you.** John speaks in a personal way. **Let us all love.** Love forms the basis of the Good News, because it was *love* which caused God to act in Christ to set men free. See note on *1 John 2:7*.

6. **Means that we must live.** Christian love is not an "ooey-gooey feeling in the tummy," but a very practical way of living in truth. [The other forms of love are valid in their sphere.] Compare *1 John 5:3; John 14:15, 23*. Christian love imitates the life of Christ (*1 John 2:7* and note).

⁷Many deceivers have gone out over the world, men who do not declare that Jesus Christ came as a human being. Such a person is a deceiver and the Enemy of Christ. ⁸Watch yourselves, then, so that you will not lose what you have worked for, but will receive your reward in full.

⁹Anyone who does not stay with the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God. Whoever does stay with the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you, then, who does not bring this teaching, do not welcome him in your home; do not even say, "Peace be with you." ¹¹For anyone who wishes him peace becomes his partner in the evil things he does.

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

7. **Many deceivers.** "The truth is that Jesus is The Christ, the Logos in human form. Those who live in truth believe this and love one another. Many follow the spirit of the Enemy of Christ, and deny this is true. I warn you against such people." **The Enemy of Christ.** Note that *each* person who denies that Jesus Christ came as a human being is The Enemy of Christ (The Antichrist). John speaks of *not one*, but *many*, who by their failure to love truth, oppose Christ and the Good News.

8. **Watch yourselves.** "Do not let anyone fool you and steal away your promise!" Although we do not *earn* our salvation, still there is a human response that is necessary. Compare what John said in *John 4:36; 6:27*. **Your reward in full.** Eternal life. See *1 John 2:25*.

9. **Anyone who does not stay.** "Some say that being put right with God through Christ is all right to begin with, but that you must *progress* on to 'higher things.' But do not be fooled by such talk! Anyone who *progresses away* from the teaching of Christ does not have God!" **Whoever does stay.** "If you remain faithful to the teaching of Christ and his apostles, you *have both* the Father and the Son!" See *1 John 5:12*.

10. **Who does not bring this teaching.** "If someone comes who claims to be a brother, but does not bring this teaching that Jesus Christ came as a human being to be the means of our salvation, then have nothing to do with him!" John connects *love* with *truth* and the *commandment*. One who purposely denies the basic fact of the Logos in human form, and so destroys the "act of God in Christ," cannot be allowed to continue as part of the messianic community (church). Compare *Rom. 16:17; Phil. 3:17*.

11. **For anyone.** "This is not a simple misunderstanding, but a deliberate attempt to destroy Christ's church! Since these people have made themselves the Enemies of Christ, you must treat them as such!" This does not conflict with *Mark 9:38-39* (see notes there) or with *Phil. 1:15-18* (see notes there). What John says here must be viewed in the seriousness of the circumstances. She must not do anything that might give this false teacher any *hint* of help in his work of destroying the faith!!!

Final Words

¹²I have so much to tell you, but I would rather not do it with paper and ink; instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you personally, so that we shall be completely happy.

¹³The children of your dear Sister send you their greetings.

I have much to write to ¹² you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

The children of your ¹³ chosen sister send their greetings.

12. **So much to tell you.** John may have more to say about the false teachers. Perhaps he does not want to write any more harsh things, which could be *taken the wrong way*. And it would be much better if he were there personally, to see firsthand what was necessary. The aged John looks forward to seeing this dear Lady.

13. **The children.** If the Lady is a real woman, then these would be the children of her sister, who were with John. They are Christians also. *Note:* Christian love is an act of will. It is treating others as God has treated us in Christ. Then, it is something that anyone and everyone has the ability to learn *as a Christian*. Christian love also involves doing God's will. By imitating God's character (He is love), we make our lives a *living sacrifice* to praise and honor Him! See *1 John 3:16-17; 5:2*.

INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD LETTER OF JOHN

The things said about the Second Letter of John apply here also. Traditional history makes Gaius the one who *wrote down* The Gospel of John, and identifies him as the Gaius of Corinth (*Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14*). He was probably an evangelist (see note on *Eph. 4:11*), and probably a church elder as well (tradition places him in the church at Pergamum).

There was trouble in the congregation of which he was part. Diotrephes, who may have been a church elder also, refused to welcome some evangelists sent by John. This seems to imply that he rejected the authority of John, and this causes some to think Diotrephes was a "Paulite" (see *1 Cor. 1:12* and note). John writes this Letter to praise the action of Gaius (*verse 5-8*), and to show his intention to come personally to deal with the false teachers. If Pergamum is the church where Gaius receives this letter then Diotrephes is probably a Nicolaitan teacher (see *Rev. 2:14-15* and notes).

Both Paul and John operated "Schools of Preaching," in the sense that they took promising young men and trained them to do the work of an evangelist (compare *2 Tim. 4:5* and note). It is probable that all the apostles trained large numbers of such preachers and teachers to fill the needs of the Christian ministry.

John probably wrote from Ephesus to churches in the area, and the time is probably the last decade of the first century.

THE THIRD LETTER OF JOHN

¹From the Elder—

To my dear Gaius, whom I truly love,

²My dear friend, I pray that everything may go well with you, and that you may be in good health—as I know you are well in spirit. ³I was so happy when some brothers arrived and told how faithful you are to the truth—just as you always live in the truth. ⁴Nothing makes me happier than to hear that my children live in the truth.

Gaius Is Praised

⁵My dear friend, you are so faithful in the work you do for the brothers, even when they are strangers. ⁶They have spoken of your love to the church here. Please help them to continue their trip in a way that will please God. ⁷For they set out on their trip in the service of Christ without

The elder, 1
To my dear friend Gaius, 2
whom I love in the truth.

Dear friend, I pray that 2
you may enjoy good health 3
and that all may go well with 4
you, even as your soul is get- 5
ting along well. It gave me 6
great joy to have some 7
brothers come and tell about 8
your faithfulness to the truth 9
and how you continue to live 10
according to the truth. I 11
have no greater joy than to 12
hear that my children are 13
living according to the truth. 14

Dear friend, you are faith- 15
ful in what you are doing for 16
the brothers, even though 17
they are strangers to you. 18
They have told the church 19
about your love. You will do 20
well to send them on their 21
way in a manner worthy of 22
God. It was for the sake of 23
the Name that they went 24
out, receiving no help from 25

1. **From the Elder.** See note on 2 John 1. **To my dear Gaius.** This is probably the Gaius of Corinth (Rom. 16:23).

2. **My dear friend.** The theme of this Letter is to praise Gaius for his good work and to urge hospitality. **In good health.** It was usual to *wish health* as a greeting. Here John wishes health, both physical and spiritual. [Some think this implies that Gaius' health was being drained by his problems with Diotrephes.]

3. **I was so happy.** "I know your spirit is in good health, because of the report some brothers brought back to me!" The Greek implies it was a *continuous good report* that was coming to John. These are brothers whom Gaius has helped.

4. **Nothing makes me happier.** It makes a preacher happy to know that someone he has helped to *grow in Christ* is being faithful to the truth.

5. **You are so faithful.** "The hospitality you show to the brothers is especially important! This is evidence of your faith!" John trained evangelists (see note on Eph. 4:11) and sent them out. They would depend upon the local churches for food and lodging. See Introduction to this Letter. **Strangers.** Gaius did not know many of these brothers personally. They were strangers to him, yet he showed his love for truth by his hospitality to them. [But contrast 2 John 10-11.]

6. **Spoken of your love.** "They all praise your good work and the hospitality you showed to them!" **Please help them.** "Since the work of ministry must continue, you will be called upon again and again to help. Since you are *God's friend*, help them in a generous way that will please God!"

7. **Any help from unbelievers.** "In their work of preaching the Good News, they do not ask any help from unbelievers. So they must depend upon people in the church like yourself, to support them." Compare 1 Cor. 9:6-18; Phil. 4:14-19.

accepting any help from unbelievers. ⁸We Christians, then, must help these men, so that we may share in their work for the truth.

Diotrephes and Demetrius

⁹I wrote a short letter to the church but Diotrephes, who loves to be their leader, will not pay any attention to what I say. ¹⁰When I come, then, I will bring up everything he has done: the terrible things he says about us and the lies he tells! But that is not enough for him; he will not receive the brothers when they come, and even stops those who want to receive them and tries to drive them out of the church!

¹¹My dear friend, do not imitate what is bad, but imitate what is good. Whoever does good belongs to God; whoever does what is bad has not seen God.

the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil

8. **We Christians, then.** John is still urging Gaius to show hospitality to the brothers and strangers who come. "We Christians can all share in the work these brothers are doing by helping them!" We can sometimes fulfill our responsibility (at least part of it) by proxy. See *Luke 10:35*.

9. **I wrote.** As an apostle, John supervised the work of the church. He would write many such short letters to keep in touch with many local churches and individuals. **But Diotrephes.** We know nothing else about him. He is probably a church elder, and may be a Nicolaitan (See notes on *Rev. 2:14-15*). **Who loves to be their leader.** Diotrephes is a church boss. It may be that the glory of power is what motivates him, but we can only guess, since we have no details. There must have been many such as this man in the early church (See *1 Pet. 5:3* and note). **Will not.** He refused to listen to what John said. Some think this means he was a Paulite (*1 Cor. 1:12*) who rejected the authority of the other apostles.

10: **When I come.** John intends to come personally and use his authority as an apostle to deal with Diotrephes (see *Acts 13:10-12* and note). **Everything he has done.** Diotrephes: (1) would not pay attention to John's letter; (2) said terrible things about John (compare *Jude 15*) and told lies to cause trouble; (3) refused to receive the brothers and would give them no hospitality; (4) tries to drive out of the fellowship all who even admit they want to receive the brothers from John. [The present continuous implies that Diotrephes was trying to drive out those who wanted to receive the brothers. See *Expositor's Greek Testament*.]

11. **What is bad.** "Don't follow the bad example of such people as Diotrephes!" But even Diotrephes is a Christian, and we ought to listen to what Paul says in *2 Thess. 3:14-15* and notes. This does not conflict with *2 John 10-11* where the circumstances are not the same. **Whoever does.** Faith is made perfect through actions (*James 2:22*). Whether a man is good or bad will show up in the general pattern of his actions. One who makes a habit of sin does not know God!

¹²Everyone speaks well of Demetrius; truth itself speaks well of him. And we add our witness, and you know that what we say is true.

Final Greetings

¹³I have so much to tell you, but I do not want to do it with pen and ink. ¹⁴I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk personally.

¹⁵Peace be with you.

All your friends send greetings. Greet all our friends personally.

has not seen God. Demetrius ¹² is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

I have much to write you, ¹³ but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. I hope to ¹⁴ see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

Peace to you. The friends ¹⁵ here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

12. **Demetrius.** We know nothing more about this man. *Roberts* thinks he was one of the brothers whom John sent out. But he may have been a church elder along with Diotrephes. He is an example of good. **Truth itself.** "The truth of God, which guides the lives of all believers, is a witness to the one who actually lives in truth!" **And we.** John is also a *witness* to the good character of Demetrius. [Letters of recommendation were used to identify true teachers to people who did not know them personally. See *Acts 18:27; 2 Cor. 3:1; Rom. 16:1; Col. 4:10.*]

13. **I have so much.** This Letter ends much the same as 2 John. John feels it best to write this short letter and deal with things in detail when he can be there in person.

14. **I hope.** John expects to visit Gaius soon. John may have made regular tours to the churches of the area.

15. **Peace be with you.** [Chapter and verse divisions date from the sixteenth century. Most Greek texts divide a 15th verse, as the TEV has done.] This is the Hebrew style of greeting (*1 Pet. 5:14*). **Friends.** This is a personal letter. This is why John says *friends* rather than *brothers*.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER FROM JUDE

From Jude . . . the brother of James. From the earliest times, Jude has been identified as the *Lord's brother*. Neither he nor his brother James mention the fact that they are the Lord's brothers in the flesh, nor would we expect them to do so, since it would have been out of harmony with the spirit of humility. He did not believe in Jesus during the public ministry (*John 7:5*), but was one of the group in the upstairs room (*Acts 1:14*) which shows he had become a believer by that time, and he and his wife traveled among the churches (*1 Cor. 9:5*).

No one can say for sure just when Jude wrote his Letter. Nor can anyone say for sure whether Jude wrote before or after the Second Letter from Peter, which is very similar. J.W. Roberts thinks it dates from 68 A.D., which would put it after Second Peter. Jude had probably read Peter's Second Letter before writing this. Jude's Letter was slower to be accepted, possibly because it is more specialized and may have had a smaller circulation.

Some people saw Christianity as a way to get rich. Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5; Acts 8:9-19; Rom. 16:17-18*. These had no love for truth, and so to get a following, they taught that what Paul said about faith meant that God would not credit sin to a believer. They said: "The sinful actions of men are decreed by God, therefore He will not punish the one who continues to sin." Compare notes on *Rev. 2:14,20*. Jude writes to show that God has already punished sin, and that He will continue to do so!

Jude and Peter write on the *same subject*, probably to emphasize that they, as "apostles of circumcision," oppose these false ideas and false teachers! See the Introduction to the Letter from James.

THE LETTER FROM JUDE

¹From Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and the brother of James—

To those who have been called by God, who live in the love of God the Father and the protection of Jesus Christ:

²May mercy, peace, and love be yours in full measure.

False Teachers

³My dear friends! I was doing my best to write to you about the salvation we share in common, when I felt the need of writing you now to encourage you to fight on for the faith which once and

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,

To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

The Sin and Doom of Godless Men

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that God has once for all entrusted to the

1. **From Jude.** If he had been one of the Twelve, he would probably have mentioned it. **Brother of James.** This identifies him. James was well known (*Gal. 2:9; Acts 21:18*). The brothers are mentioned in *Matt. 13:55*. **Who have been called.** "To those who have been called by God through their faith." Compare *Rev. 18:4*. **Who live.** Not only have Jude's readers been called by God, they also live in the love of God! Compare *Eph. 6:23-24*. **The protection.** Compare *1 John 5:4-5* and notes.

2. **In full measure.** Jude wants them to have these blessings in full measure, which comes through their faith and love. Compare *1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2* and notes.

3. **My dear friends.** Jude stresses the common love which molds them into *one fellowship* in Christ! I was. Jude's first intention was to write to them (as an "apostle of circumcision") about the salvation which both Jew and Gentile shares in common. The early Christians did a lot of writing at a time when writing was not so widely used (See *Luke 1:1-4*). But of the things Jude may have written, the Holy Spirit included only this short letter in the New Testament. **When I felt the need.** "The problem about the false teachers made me change my plans." **To fight on.** "In a gentle and loving spirit, you must use the Jewish scriptures (Old Testament) and the writing of the evangelists and apostles (which would be complete now, except for this Letter and the writings of John) to oppose and destroy the false teaching that some are doing, and to teach the truth!!!" **The faith.** The faith is the teaching of the Good News which God spoke through Christ (*Heb. 1:2*), and which Christ passed on to his disciples (*1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17*.) **Once and for all.** The Good News did not come in "bits and pieces" like the Old Testament revelation. It was given once and for all through Christ, even before the New Testament was written down. In the childhood age of the church, the Holy Spirit was the direct source of *the faith*. The Holy Spirit saw to it that the complete message was written down, and we have it as the New Testament. Compare *John 14:26; Gal. 1:6-9*.

for all God has given to his people. ⁴For some godless men have slipped in unnoticed among us, who distort the message about the grace of our God to excuse their immoral ways, and reject Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord. Long ago the Scriptures predicted this condemnation they have received.

⁵For even though you know all this, I want to remind you of how the Lord saved the people of Israel from the land of Egypt, but afterward destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶Remember the angels who did not stay within the limits of their proper authority, but abandoned their own dwelling place: they are bound with eternal chains in the darkness below, where God is keeping them for that great Day on which they will be condemned. ⁷Remember Sodom and Gomorrah, and the nearby towns, whose people acted as those angels did and committed sexual immorality and perversion: they suffer the punishment of eternal fire as a plain warning to all.

saints. For certain men ⁴ whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Though you already know ⁵ all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. ⁷ In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

4. For some godless men. "I felt a need to write because some spiritual saboteurs have slipped in unnoticed." **Who distort.** "They claim to be inspired. They say God is too good to punish sinners. They teach an *easy grace*, which they say allows the believer unlimited sin with no fear of punishment." **And reject Jesus Christ.** "They say our human bodies are totally evil, and deny that Jesus is The Christ. They say the Logos who is infinitely holy could not have come in evil flesh and blood. By doing this, they reject Christ-on-the-cross, who is the *means* of our salvation!" **Long ago.** "The Scriptures predicted the fact that such people would come, and also the doom of such as these!" See *verses 14 & 17*.

5. For even though. "I am using things which you already know to prove to you that God will punish those who purposely continue to sin as a habit." **But afterward destroyed.** "Even after God has saved his people Israel and had led them out of Egypt, he did not hesitate to destroy all who sinned by refusing to believe what he said." See *Num. 14:29; Heb. 3:18-19*.

6. Remember the angels. "Even such beings as angels, who do not have a body of flesh and blood and whom even the false teachers admit were created holy, were punished by God when they sinned!" *2 Pet. 2:4* also mentions this. Some try to connect this with *Gen. 6:2; Isa. 14:4-23; 24:21-22*.

7. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah. "Remember the wrath of God against the sin of these people!" **Acted as those angels did.** Jude does not mean that they all sinned by committing the same acts of sin, but in each case, sin was a rebellion against God! **Sexual immorality and perversion.** This was the sin of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Homosexuality, especially, brought God's wrath down on them! **Eternal fire.** "Totally destroyed by fire, they are an example of God's eternal fire which will punish the wicked! This is a plain warning to all, that God does not permit sin!"

⁸In the same way also, these men have visions which make them sin against their own bodies; they despise God's authority and insult the glorious beings above. ⁹Not even the chief angel Michael has done this. In his quarrel with the Devil, when they argued about who would have the body of Moses, Michael did not dare condemn the Devil with insulting words, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰But these men insult things they do not understand; and those things that they know by instinct, like wild animals, are the very things that destroy them. ¹¹How terrible for them! They have followed the way that Cain took. For the sake of money they have given themselves over to the error that Balaam committed. They have rebelled as Korah re-

In the very same way, ⁸ these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority, and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel ⁹ Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Yet these men speak ¹⁰ abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them.

Woe to them! They have ¹¹ taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

8. In the same way also. "These men show the same spirit of rebellion that these examples show. It is the spirit of the Enemy of Christ which motivates them!" **Have visions.** Since such people claimed to be inspired (see *1 John 4:1*), they would boast about having *visions* from God, in which He was supposed to have told them the (false) things they were teaching. [*MacKnight* takes it as *sleep*, which comes through the intoxication of sin.] **Sin against their own bodies.** Our bodies are holy (*1 Cor. 6:18-20*). We defile them by sin. Compare *2 Pet. 2:2, 10, 18*. **They despise.** "The Israelites despised God's authority when they would not believe him. The angels despised God's authority when they sinned. These people despise God by rejecting Jesus Christ! In fact, they reject all authority. And in their pride, they even insult the angels, and God himself!" Compare *verse 15; 2 Pet. 2:10*.

9. Not even. "Look at the example of the chief angel Michael. Even he did not use insulting words to condemn the Devil who is a fallen angel! This ought to teach you that no human being should do such a thing as these false teachers are doing!" Jude refers to a Jewish tradition found in the apocryphal book, *The Assumption of Moses*. He only uses the fact he understands to be true, and does not imply that the apocryphal book is inspired. Compare *2 Pet. 2:10-11*.

10. But these men. "They claim to have special *knowledge*, but they show they are liars by insulting things they do not understand! They are not able to judge spiritual matters, because they are not spiritual (*1 Cor. 2:14; Col. 2:18*)!" **They know by instinct.** "They live on the level of animals! They destroy themselves by their own evil desires." The false teachers were saying that God had made them as they were, and that they were only following God by living on the level of wild animals. Jude destroys their excuses by the things he says!

11. How terrible for them. This is the kind of language Jesus uses in *Matt. 23:13-15*. **That Cain took.** Cain was selfish, jealous, and showed his *hate* by murdering his brother. **That Balaam committed.** See *2 Pet. 2:15-16*. **As Korah rebelled.** *Num. 16:1-35*. He opposed the appointment of the family of Aaron to the priesthood. Jude sees the actions of the false teachers described in these three examples. They are motivated by hate and selfishness, by greed and love of money, and they reject God's authority and the ones He has chosen to be teachers.

belled, and like him they are destroyed. ¹²They are like dirty spots in your fellowship meals, with their shameless carousing. They take care of themselves only. They are like clouds carried along by the wind and bringing no rain. They are like trees that bear no fruit, even in autumn, trees that have been pulled up by the roots and are completely dead. ¹³They are like wild waves of the sea, with their shameful deeds showing up like foam. They are like wandering stars, for whom God has reserved a place forever in the deepest darkness.

¹⁴It was Enoch, the sixth direct descendant from Adam, who long ago prophesied this about them: "Look! The Lord will come with many thousands of his holy angels, ¹⁵to bring judgment on all, to condemn all godless sinners for all the godless deeds they have performed, and for all the terrible words these godless men have spoken against God!"

¹⁶These men are always grumbling and blaming others; they follow their own evil desires; they brag about themselves, and flatter others in order to get their own way.

These men are blemishes ¹² at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves ¹³ of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

Enoch, the seventh from ¹⁴ Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to ¹⁵ judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly acts they have done in their ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." These men ¹⁶ are grumblers and fault-finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

12. Like dirty spots. "They are things of shame, like a dirty spot on a tablecloth." In your fellowship meals. Paul condemned the abuse of the fellowship meals (1 Cor. 11:17-22), but not the meals themselves. See notes on Acts 2:46; 20:7. The false teachers took part in the fellowship meals out of selfish motives, without any love for the brothers. **Of themselves only.** 1 Cor. 11:21. **Like clouds.** 2 Pet. 2:17. **Like trees.** Compare Matt. 21:19 and note. They died in both a Jewish and a Christian vineyard!

13. Like wild waves. Isa. 57:20. **Like wandering stars.** "Since they have rejected Jesus Christ and the truth, they are like shooting stars who flash across the sky and are gone forever!" 2 Pet. 2:17.

14. It was Enoch. Jewish tradition preserved some of the things which Enoch said. A *Book of Enoch* existed, but it was probably written in the first century B.C. Since Jude writes by inspiration, he quotes only facts, and does not authenticate the *Book of Enoch*. **Sixth direct descendant.** 1) Adam; 2) Seth; 3) Enos; 4) Cainan; 5) Mahalaleel; 6) Jared; 7) Enoch. **The Lord will come.** Enoch looks forward to a Day of Judgment! Compare Matt. 25:31.

15. To bring judgment. "Do not be fooled by what the false teachers say! Sinners will not escape the results of their godless deeds nor the terrible words they have spoken against God by saying that Jesus Christ was a phony (impostor) who deserved the death which he died!"

16. These men. This is Jude's description of them. "These ungodly teachers grumble against God for their hardships, and blame others for their problems (which they bring on themselves)! They are loud-mouthed boasters about themselves, who are insolent to the Roman authorities, and who will not listen to the true teachers. They flatter others to get their own way in the things that are done, and also to get people's money for themselves!"

Warnings and Instructions

¹⁷But remember, my friends! Remember what you were told in the past by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸They said to you, "When the last days come, men will appear who will make fun of you, men who follow their own godless desires." ¹⁹These are the men who cause divisions, who are controlled by their natural desires, who do not have the Spirit. ²⁰But you, my friends, keep on building yourselves up on your most sacred faith. Pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, ²¹and keep yourselves in the love of God, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy to give you eternal life.

²²Show mercy toward those who have doubts:

A Call to Persevere

But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt;

17. **But remember!** "To prevent them from fooling even you, I ask you to remember what the true apostles of our Lord Jesus told you in the past!"

18. **When the last days come.** See *1 John 2:18* and note. The *last days* began at Pentecost (*Acts 2:16-17* and notes). **Men will appear.** "The apostles told you many times that these things would happen. People will make fun of the self-control and holy living that they see in you!" Compare *2 Pet. 3:3*; *1 Pet. 4:2-5*; *1 Tim. 4:1*; *2 Tim. 3:1-9*. The Book of Revelation also deals with this.

19. **Who cause divisions.** "In order to do as they please, they cause divisions and separate themselves and their followers from the fellowship of the messianic community (church)." Compare *1 Cor. 11:19*. **Who do not have the Spirit.** "These may claim to have the Spirit, but their claim is false!" Compare *Rom. 8:9*. [It is also possible that he means: "They are so fascinated with their sensuous desires, that they no longer have any real sense of the spiritual (*1 Cor. 2:14*). Did they ever really have the Spirit???" Compare *Heb. 6:4-6*.]

20. **But you, my friends.** "You, who do have the Spirit (*Acts 5:32*), by your conduct and by encouraging one another, must continue to build yourselves up on the foundation of your most sacred faith (the Good News)!" The false teachers proclaimed an un-sacred or unholy faith. **Pray in the power.** *MacKnight* views this as *inspired prayer*. Compare *1 Cor. 14:15*; *James 5:14-15*. But it is also true that every Christian has the Holy Spirit as his *prayer-partner* (*Rom. 8:26* and notes). The false teachers could have no such prayer-partner! Prayer and immorality are incompatible!!!

21. **And keep yourselves.** "God does not cease to love any man, since God himself is *love*. However, you as a person must keep yourself within the circle of His *fatherly love*, which is only available to the one who can truthfully say, '*Father! my Father!*' (*Rom. 8:15*). **As you wait.** See *Phil. 3:20-21*. The false teachers did not *wait* (*2 Pet. 3:4*)

22. **Show mercy.** "Some Christians have honest doubts brought on by the things the false teachers have said. Be gentle and kind as you try to bring them back to the truth of Christ!" Compare *Gal. 6:1*.

²³save them, by snatching them out of the fire. Show mercy also, mixed with fear, to others as well, but hate their very clothes, stained by their sinful lusts.

Prayer of Praise

²⁴To him who is able to keep you from falling and bring you faultless and joyful before his glorious presence—²⁵to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, from all ages past, and now, and forever and ever! Amen.

snatch others from the fire ²³ and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Doxology

To him who is able to ²⁴ keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to ²⁵ the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

23. **Out of the fire.** "I want to impress on you just how serious the matter of sin really is! When you rescue Christians from the false teachers, you are *snatching them out of the fire!*" **But hate their very clothes.** The symbolism is that of *Lev. 13:47-52*. "Even some of the false teachers themselves can be saved! But you must be afraid, even while you are trying to influence them, because you could be infected with the disease of sin and unbelief! However, it is our **PURPOSE** to save as many as possible!" Compare *1 Cor. 9:19-22*.

24. **To him.** To God our Father. **Who is able.** "To give you courage to *run the full distance in the faith*, and to show you God's promise, I tell you He is able to keep you from falling into error or sin!" See *1 Cor. 10:13*. **And bring you.** "God has acted in Christ to set us free! By means of Christ, He is able to bring you faultless and joyful before His glorious presence at the Judgment!" Compare Paul's prayer in *1 Thess. 5:23*.

25. **To the only God.** See note on *Rom. 16:27*. **Through Jesus Christ.** God saves us through Jesus Christ our Lord! [Both the TEV and NIV follow the *corrected Greek text*.] **And forever and ever!** Compare *Rev. 5* and notes. These last two verses are Jude's doxology of praise to the God of Israel and to His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!!!

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

It is 96 A.D., the church is in what seems to be a "death-struggle" with the forces of evil, and the Christians *seem* to be losing! But things are not always what they seem to be outwardly. "Write, then, the things you see, both the things that are now, and the things that will happen afterward" (*Rev. 1:19*).

To understand this book, we must first begin at the fact that it was intended for the believers in John's day and age (*Rev. 1:1-3*). It is God's answer to the prayers and tears of severely persecuted Christians who were scattered through the cities of Asia Minor. It must be studied in the light of the conditions that existed in the last ten years of the First Century A.D. It shows Jesus as the EXPEDITER (one who puts into effect an order or decree in the shortest possible time) of God's Plan (*Rev. 5*). The Trumpets of chapter 9 answer the question: "*How can a loving God allow pain and suffering?*" To the Christian who suffers pain, this is a Seal (compare *Rev. 7:2-3* note); but to the unbeliever, this pain and suffering is a Trumpet of warning!

The theme of this book is stated very well in the words of *Rev. 17:14*. "*They will fight against the Lamb; but the Lamb, and his called, chosen, and faithful followers with him, will defeat them, for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.*"

Chapters 1 to 3 form the basic foundation of this entire book. Revelation is made up of "picture-symbols," which, like "modern art," are intended to express an idea. Each of these picture-symbols presents *one* central idea.

It seems normal to us to write an account by "beginning at the beginning, going on to the end, and then stopping." But there are other ways of looking at things. The Jewish mind often arranged things according to their importance, rather than by the order in which they happened. And sometimes they would record one event out of sequence just because it seemed to them worthy of stress. Still another method is to work like a farmer plowing his field: make one pass across the field, go back, move over slightly, and make another pass, and continue until the whole field has been covered.

Revelation uses this third method. We find *seven* (the Divine number) parallel sections in the book. All sections begin with the *First Coming* of Christ, and all continue to, or past, the *Second Coming*.

(1) The Church in the World. chapters 1-3.

(*Matt. 28:20*)

(2) Trial and Persecution of the Church. chapters 4-7.

(*John 16:33*)

(3) The Church VICTORIOUS! chapters 8-11.

(*Luke 18:7*)

(4) Christ versus the Dragon. chapters 12-14.

(*Gen. 3:15*)

(5) Christ's final wrath. chapters 15-16.

(*Rom. 2:5*)

(6) The fall of Babylon. chapters 15-16 17-19.

(*2 Pet. 3:13*)

(7) Christ and his Church VICTORIOUS! chapters 20-22.

(*Rom. 8:37*)

INTO ETERNITY FOREVER!

In Revelation, the curtain of both the present and the future is lifted, so that we may know what is being worked out here and now, and the GUARANTEED CERTAINTY that those who win the victory through faith, will receive everything God has promised them!

THE REVELATION OF JOHN

1 This book is about what Jesus Christ revealed, which God gave him, to show to God's servants what must happen very soon. Christ made these things known to his servant John by sending his angel to him, ²and John has told all that he has seen. This is his report concerning the message from God and the truth revealed by Jesus Christ. ³Happy is the one who reads this book, and happy are those who listen to the words of this prophetic message and obey what is written in this book! For the time is near when all this will happen.

Greetings to the Seven Churches

⁴From John to the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace be yours from God, who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven

Prologue

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Greetings and Doxology

John, ⁴
To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before

The Church in the World. Chapters 1 - 3. (Matt. 28:20)

[Chapters 1 to 3 form the basic foundation of this entire book. Revelation is made up of "picture-symbols," which, like "modern art," are intended to express an idea. Each of these picture-symbols presents *one* central idea. Be careful not to try to give a "deeper meaning," *any more than is necessary* to bring out this *central idea*. To evaluate these, ask: (1) How much description forms the entire picture-symbol? (2) What is the *central idea*?]

1. **Revealed.** The curtain of both the present and the future is lifted (*verse 19*). **Jesus Christ.** It is his message (see *chapter 5*). **Which God gave him.** God's Plan is behind it all. **By sending his angel.** Throughout this book, angels are given the messages to reveal. [See *Heb. 1:14; Rev. 4:1; 21:9; 22:1; 22:8; etc.*] John, as a prophet, is to record all this and pass it on to all mankind.

3. **Happy is the one who reads.** This refers to the "lector" who read the Scriptures aloud. This blessing is for the one who reads, those who listen and obey.

4. **John to the seven churches.** This is to the Roman province called Asia. Ephesus was the capital. All seven churches are in that province. They are named in *verse 11*. There were other churches as well in Asia (*Acts 20:17; Col. 4:13*). Seven is the perfect or sacred number, and these churches are symbolic of all the church everywhere at every age of time. **Grace and peace.** A blessing, directly to the seven, indirectly to all the church. **God, who is.** See *Exod. 3:14*. **The seven spirits.** Symbolic of the fullness and perfection of the Holy Spirit.

spirits in front of his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn Son who was raised from death, who is also the ruler of the kings of earth.

He loves us, and by his death he has freed us from our sins ⁶and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father. To Jesus Christ be the glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

⁷Look, he is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, including those who pierced him. All peoples of earth will mourn over him. Certainly so! Amen.

⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God Almighty, who is, who was, and who is to come.

A Vision of Christ

⁹I am John, your brother, and in union with Jesus I share with you in suffering, and in his Kingdom, and in enduring. I was put on the island named Patmos because I had proclaimed God's word and the truth that Jesus revealed.

his throne, and from Jesus ⁵ Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth,

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us ⁶ to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father —to be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Look, he is coming with ⁷ the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.

So shall it be! Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the ⁸ Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

One Like a Son of Man

⁹ I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of

5. **And from Jesus Christ.** He is the faithful witness (*John 8:14*); the firstborn Son (*Col. 1:18*); the ruler (*Eph. 1:21*). **He loves us.** Continuous love! **Death . . . freed us.** Our sin-offering (see *1 Pet. 1:18-19*).

7. **Look, he is coming.** (*Matt. 26:64; Acts 1:9-11*.) **Everyone.** All the dead will awake. **Those who pierced him.** National Israel (*Zech. 12:10*). **All peoples of earth.** Because he is coming to judge the world (*Acts 17:31*).

8. **I am the Alpha and the Omega.** The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet - the beginning and the end (*Isa. 41:4*). All things begin and end in God (The Father - see also *Rev. 21:5-6*. But notice *Col. 1:15-16*).

9-11. **I am John.** He mentions himself for the third time. [The fourth and fifth times are in *Rev. 21:2 & 22:8*.] **I share with you in suffering.** All the church was being persecuted. **Kingdom . . . Enduring.** Being part of Christ's Kingdom also means enduring patiently. **Island named Patmos.** In some way, John's loyalty to Christ had caused his exile to this cruel island. Historical evidence points to 95-96 A.D. for the date of this book. Patmos is a rocky "prison house" in the south part of the Aegean Sea about thirty miles in circumference. **On the Lord's day.** The resurrection of Jesus on Sunday caused that day to be known as the Lord's day. The letters written by Barnabas, Ignatius and Dionysius near this time, speak of the Lord's day in this way, and this "name" is commonly used from that time onward. It is not to be confused with the "Sabbath day" which was Saturday (see Smith's Bible Dictionary, etc.).

¹⁰On the Lord's day the Spirit took control of me, and I heard a loud voice, that sounded like a trumpet, speaking behind me. ¹¹It said, "Write down what you see, and send the book to these seven churches: in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

¹²I turned around to see who was talking to me. There I saw seven gold lampstands. ¹³Among them stood a being who looked like a man, wearing a robe that reached to his feet, and a gold band around his chest. ¹⁴His hair was white as wool, or as snow, and his eyes blazed like fire; ¹⁵his feet shone like brass melted in the furnace and then polished, and his voice sounded like a mighty waterfall. ¹⁶He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth. His face was as bright as the midday sun. ¹⁷When I saw him I fell down at his feet like a dead man. He placed his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the

Jesus. On the Lord's Day I 10
was in the Spirit, and I heard
behind me a loud voice like
a trumpet, which said: 11
"Write on a scroll what you
see and send it to the seven
churches: to Ephesus,
Smyrna, Pergamum, Thya-
tira, Sardis, Philadelphia
and Laodicea."

I turned around to see the 12
voice that was speaking to
me. And when I turned I saw
seven golden lampstands,
and among the lampstands 13
was someone "like a son of
man," dressed in a robe
reaching down to his feet and
with a golden sash around
his chest. His head and hair 14
were white like wool, as white
as snow, and his eyes were
like blazing fire. His feet 15
were like brass glowing in a
furnace, and his voice was
like the sound of rushing
waters. In his right hand he
held seven stars, and out of
his mouth came a sharp
double-edged sword. His
face was like the sun shining
in all its brilliance. 16

When I saw him, I fell at 17
his feet as though dead.
Then he placed his right
hand on me and said: "Do
not be afraid. I am the First

The Spirit took control of me. He was "lifted up" to that spiritual state in which revelations are given (*John 14:26; 2 Pet. 1:21*). **Write down what you see.** This message was to be circulated among all the Christians (*verse 4*).

12. I saw seven gold lampstands. He saw this first. They symbolize the seven churches (*verse 20*).

13. Among them. "I will be with you always!" **Like a man.** (*John 1:14; Rom. 8:3*) [*Son of Man - Luke 22:69-70; Dan. 7:13.*] **A robe . . . a gold band.** The robe of a high priest with the gold band of a king.

14. His hair was white. Not with age, but with heavenly glory! White symbolizes purity and victory.

15. His feet . . . his voice. Along with the *eyes that blaze like fire*, these are symbolic of great power and authority (see *Dan. 10:6; Ezek. 43:2*).

16. Seven stars. The "angels" of the churches (*verse 20*). **Sharp two-edged sword.** A symbol of God's word (*Rev. 19:15; Eph. 6:17*). **His face was as bright.** See the transfiguration (*Luke 9:29*).

17. I fell down. Shock and fright! **Don't be afraid.** The old love (*John 14:1-3*). **The first and the last.** Compare *verse 8*. Note the similarity between God and Christ.

first and the last. ¹⁸I am the living one! I was dead, but look, I am alive forever and ever. I have authority over death and the world of the dead. ¹⁹Write, then, the things you see, both the things that are now, and the things that will happen afterward. ²⁰Here is the secret meaning of the seven stars that you see in my right hand, and of the seven gold lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

The Message to Ephesus

2 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: "This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven gold lampstands. ²I know what you have done; I know how hard you have worked and how patient you have been. I know that you cannot tolerate evil men, and that you have tested those who say they are apostles but are not, and have found out that they are liars. ³You are patient, you have suffered troubles for my

and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

"Write, therefore, what ¹⁹you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. The mystery of the ²⁰seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

To the Church in Ephesus

2 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds, ² your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. ³

18. I am the living one! Killed, but alive forever! Note the stress on life. **I have authority.** Compare *Matt. 28:18*. He has authority even over death and Hades [the world of the dead]. He will raise everyone from death at his Coming! See *John 5:27-29*.

19. Write. John is to preserve this vision so that all may share its message. **Now.** Current events, dating from the First Coming of Christ. **Afterward.** Those things which had not yet happened. The curtain of both the present and the future is lifted.

20. Seven stars. The "angels" of the seven churches. "Angel" means "messenger," and is used for both human and heavenly messengers in the Bible [in the original language]. "Angels" here must refer to the "evangelists" [preachers - see note on *Eph. 4:11*] of the churches since John is to write to them. Compare *Malachi 2:7*; *2 Tim. 4:5*.

[These seven churches are symbolic of all the church everywhere at all times. The letters to the churches describe conditions and events which occur again and again in the history of the church in the world. The geography of these churches can be found in a good Bible Dictionary. We concentrate on the spiritual lesson to be learned from each of these.]

The idea which would make these churches represent seven successive periods of church history is clearly false, since this would make the dead church at Sardis represent the golden age of Reformation.]

1-2. To the angel of the church in Ephesus. To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **This is the message.** See *Rev. 1:13, 16, 20*. **I know what you have done.** This church had a good past record. They had worked hard; they had aggressively carried out the Great Commission in a spirit of patience; they had fought for the Faith (*Jude 3*) and tested those who made the claim to be apostles (*1 John 4:1-3*).

3. You are patient. All the Devil could do to them did not make them give up!

sake, and you have not given up. ⁴But here is what I have against you: you do not love me now as you did at first. ⁵Remember how far you have fallen! Turn from your sins and do what you did at first. If you don't turn from your sins, I will come to you and take your lampstand from its place. ⁶But here is what you have in your favor: you hate what the Nicolaitans do, as much as I.

⁷"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!

"To those who have won the victory I will give the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life that grows in the Garden of God."

The Message to Smyrna

⁸"To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

"This is the message from the one who is the first and the last, who died and lived again. ⁹I know your troubles; I know that you are poor—but really you are rich! I know the evil things said against you by those who claim to be Jews, but are not; they are a group that belongs to

Yet I hold this against you: ⁴You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁶

He who has an ear, let him ⁷hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

To the Church in Smyrna

"To the angel of the church ⁸in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him ⁹who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a

4. **You do not love me.** A very serious charge! Paul had planted the church here about 52 A.D. (*Acts 18:19-21*). This church was more than forty years old as Christ dictates the letter to John. A second generation has grown up who do not have the intense enthusiasm, spirit, and love which the first generation church had. Christ was not "real" to them. (Compare *Joshua 24:31; Judges 2:7, 10.*) They were fiercely zealous for truth, yet they did not love Christ! [This lack of love characterized the Pharisees. They were fanatics for truth (as they understood it) but despised everybody else (*Luke 18:9-12*). One who despises others, will come to despise God as well!]

5. **Remember how far you have fallen!** (1) They had been at a high spiritual level. (2) They had lost their hold on Christ and had dropped into the pit of spiritual defeat [*but they did not know it!*]. (3) **Turn!** They must actively recapture this love. It is AGAPE - *an act of will.* "*I will love God; I will love fellow man.*" See *1 John 4:15-21*. **If you don't.** This warning speaks to every church which has lost its "first love." It will cease to exist, if it does not turn from its SIN [IT IS A SIN NOT TO LOVE] and recapture the Spirit and Power of Christ!

6. **Here . . . in your favor.** The Nicolaitans taught that Christian liberty gave permission to live immorally. They were right to hate what the Nicolaitans did [not the Nicolaitans themselves].

7. **If you have ears.** A grim warning to listen carefully. **To those who have won the victory.** God's promise! Christian life is a battle. **Tree of life.** Note the stress on LIFE. [See *Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Rev. 22:2.*] **Garden of God.** Paradise (*2 Cor. 12:2-4*) - the home of God's people.

8. **To the angel of the church in Smyrna.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*.

9. **I know your troubles.** Being a Christian at that time often meant losing your job, and hardship followed. The Lord tells those believers that they must not let themselves fall into self-pity. They are poor - yet rich in spiritual things (*Matt. 6:20; 19:21; Luke 12:21*). Their Lord knows all this! **Evil things said against you.** These who claimed to be Jews slandered Christ and accused Christians before the Roman officials (and did what they could to get Christians fired from their jobs). See *Acts 13:50*;

Satan! ¹⁰Do not be afraid of anything you are about to suffer. Listen! The Devil will put you to the test by having some of you thrown into prison; your troubles will last ten days. Be faithful to me, even if it means death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!

"Those who win the victory will not be hurt by the second death."

The Message to Pergamum

¹²"To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

"This is the message from the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. ¹³I know where you live, there where Satan has his throne. You are true to me, and you did not abandon your faith in me even during the time when Antipas, a faithful witness for me, was killed there where Satan lives. ¹⁴But here are a few things I have against you: there with you are some who follow the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak how to cause the people of Israel to sin by eating food that had been offered to idols, and by committing

synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

He who has an ear, let him ¹¹ hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

To the Church in Pergamum

"To the angel of the church ¹² in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where ¹³ you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

Nevertheless, I have a few ¹⁴ things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual im-

14:2, 5, 19; 17:5; 21:27-30; 24:2. These "Jews" are no longer God's people.

10. **Do not be afraid.** You may suffer, but do not fear. **The Devil.** He is the power behind those who claim to be Jews. ["Jew" in the Bible is applied to different groups of people. Sometimes it means specifically the Pharisees, Sadducees and teachers of the Law (the group who rejected Christ).] **Your troubles will last ten days.** A definite, full, but short period of time. See *Matt. 24:22; 2 Cor. 4:8-9; 1 Pet. 1:6-9*. **Be faithful to me.** Not just until death, but even if it costs you your life! **Crown of life.** Note the emphasis on victory over death! (See also *2 Tim. 4:7-8*.)

11. **Not be hurt by the second death.** Life eternal to those who win the victory! The second death is eternal separation from God (*Rev. 20:14*).

12. **To the angel of the church in Pergamum.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **Sharp two-edged sword.** See *Rev. 1:16*.

13. **I know where you live.** They lived in a center of Satan-inspired idol worship. Christians were asked to burn incense to the fetich of the emperors and to say "Caesar is our Lord." **You are true to me.** They resisted the temptation to repudiate Christ to save themselves. They kept their faith even when Antipas was martyred. [The identity of Antipas is not known.]

14. **A few things.** Probably, they emphasized individuality to the point where church discipline was ignored. In the error of Balaam (*Num. 25:2; 31:16*) false teachers at Pergamum taught Christians to join in the feasts of idols and the sex orgies. They may have taught that this was allowed in order to escape persecution.

immorality. ¹⁵In the same way, you also have people among you who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶Turn from your sins, then! If not, I will come to you soon and fight against those people with the sword that comes out of my mouth.

¹⁷"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!

"To those who have won the victory I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give each of them a white stone, on which a new name is written which no one knows except the one who receives it."

The Message to Thyatira

¹⁸To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

"This is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes blaze like fire, whose feet shine like polished brass. ¹⁹I know what you do. I know your love, your faithfulness, your service, and your patience. I know that you are doing more now than you did at first. ²⁰But here is what I have against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a messenger of God. She teaches and misleads my servants into committing immorality and eating food that has been

morality. And you have ¹⁵ others who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

He who has an ear, let him ¹⁷ hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

To the Church in Thyatira

"To the angel of the church ¹⁸ in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished brass. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. ¹⁹

Nevertheless, I have this ²⁰ against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food

15. In the same way. Nicolaitans - see verse 6.

16. Turn from your sins. Forgiveness requires turning from sin first. If not I will come. A grim warning to the unrepentant.

17. If you have ears. Listen! Hidden manna. The bread of life is Jesus Christ - hidden from the world. A white stone. The symbol of being pronounced "not guilty." It implies victory over sin and the Devil. A new name. Symbolic of the new relationship the Christian will have with God and Christ in that Eternal World (compare 2 Cor. 5:17-21).

18. To the angel of the church in Thyatira. To the evangelist. See note on Rev. 1:20.

19. I know what you do. They had done the opposite of the church at Ephesus. They had continued to grow stronger in their "first love," and showed this in the way they helped the poor.

20. But here is what I have against you. Here in Thyatira, labor guilds were centered around an idol. Sex orgies and drunkenness were part of the activity of these guilds. Obviously a Christian could not take part in this sort of thing, so, he lost his job! This created terrific pressure on the Christians to participate in these orgies, so he could keep his job and feed his family (see 1 Pet. 4:4; compare 1 Cor. 7:26-28). Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, symbolizes seduction, idolatry and immorality [1 Kings 16:31; 18:4;

offered to idols. ²¹I have given her time to turn from her sins, but she does not wish to turn from her immorality. ²²And so I will throw her on a bed where she and those who committed adultery with her will suffer terribly. I will do this now, unless they repent from the wicked things they did with her. ²³I will also kill her followers, and then all the churches will know that I am he who knows men's thoughts and wishes. I will repay each one of you according to what you have done.

²⁴"But the rest of you in Thyatira have not followed this evil teaching; you have not learned what the others call 'the deep secrets of Satan.' I say to you that I will not put any other burden on you. ²⁵But you must hold firmly to what you have until I come. ²⁶⁻²⁸To those who win the victory, who continue to do what I want until the very end, I will give the same authority which I received from my Father: I will give them authority over the nations, to rule them with an iron rod and to break them to pieces like clay pots. I will also give them the morning star.

sacrificed to idols. I have ²¹ given her time to repent of her immorality, but she will not. So I will cast her on ²² a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her ²³ children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. Now I say to the rest ²⁴ of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): Only ²⁵ hold on to what you have until I come.

To him who overcomes ²⁶ and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—

'He will rule them with a ²⁷ rod of iron and dash them to pieces like pottery'—

just as I have received authority from my Father. I ²⁸ will also give him the morn-

19:1-2]. Here "Jezebel" symbolizes a faction in the church who developed an "easy way out." What they said must have been this: "You can't conquer sin unless you experience it. If you learn the deep things of Satan by worshiping the idol and joining the orgy, you will be a better Christian." The church at Thyatira was permitting this, but the One whose "eyes blaze like fire" is not to be fooled! He has said: "You must be holy, because I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16).

21. **I have given her time.** It is God's wish that everyone would turn from sin. Even Jezebel is offered the opportunity to repent. (See why Jesus came! John 3:16-17.)

22. **And so I will throw her.** A "bed" and "terrible suffering" are symbolic of God's wrath. Those who refuse to turn from their sin bring upon themselves certain punishment!

23. **I will also kill her followers.** A grim threat of Divine vengeance upon those who "follow Jezebel" (by participating in this sin). **Then all the churches will know.** God loves us (see Rom. 5:8-11) and wants to bless us. But sin brings punishment, sometimes in this life (see Ananias and Sapphira - Acts 5:1-11).

24. **But the rest of you.** Some were faithful and had not followed the false way of Jezebel. **Any other burden.** Only to avoid the sins of the faction. [Compare Acts 15:28-29.]

25. **But you must hold firmly.** To the gospel of Christ which the apostles had taught them.

26-28. **To those who win the victory.** The world may seem to be winning now, but it is the Christians who really are ruling the world right now at this time! (See Rev. 8:3-5; 5:8-10; Rom. 5:17.) **I will give them authority.** A just reward for the suffering Christian! (Compare Luke 19:17; 1 Cor. 4:20.)

The morning star. The right to share in Christ's glory! (Compare Rev. 22:16; 2 Pet. 1:19.) **If you have ears.** Grim warning to the wicked; confident hope to the friends of God!

²⁹“If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!”

The Message to Sardis

3 “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: “This is the message from the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know what you are doing; I know that you have the reputation of being alive, even though you are dead! ²So wake up, and strengthen what you still have, before it dies completely. For I find that what you have done is not yet perfect in the sight of my God. ³Remember, then, what you were taught and how you heard it; obey it, and turn from your sins. If you do not wake up, I will come upon you like a thief, and you will not even know the hour when I come. ⁴But a few of you there in Sardis have kept your clothes clean. You will walk with me, clothed in white, because you are worthy to do so. ⁵Those who win the victory will be clothed like this in white, and I will not remove their names from the book of the living. In the presence of my Father and of his angels I will declare openly that they belong to me.

⁶“If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!”

ing star. He who has an ear, ²⁹ let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Sardis

3 “To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; ³ obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁴ He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. ⁵ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ⁶

1. **To the angel of the church in Sardis.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **I know what you are doing.** Sardis was sinking into the death of spiritual apathy. Christ has the “seven [life-giving] spirits” of God. He knows their need of life, and calls for them to repent and live.

2. **So wake up.** Sardis still has a good name, but it sleeps spiritually. In Pergamum and Thyatira, a small part of the church had been captured by the temptation of the world. At Sardis, almost the entire church had fallen. But, there is still hope that renewal can come! **Not yet perfect.** The forms were there, and the ceremonies, but the spirit and power were lacking (*compare 2 Tim. 3:5*).

3. **Remember . . . obey it.** They had received the gospel of Christ. They must obey it again, as they had once done. **Like a thief.** A grim warning of sudden disaster, if they do not repent.

4. **But a few of you.** God had some few who were still faithful to him. These were “lights” in the darkness. **Clothed in white.** Symbolic of the victory of God’s people (*see Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:8*).

5. **Those who win.** Those who are spiritually dead will have their names erased from the book of the living. Those who win will receive everything the Lord has promised them! [Book of the living: ancient cities wrote the names of their citizens in a book. Criminals had their names erased, also the dead.] **I will declare openly.** See *Matt. 10:32-33*. Christ will cite those who cite him! [CRRE: to single out and call special attention to.]

6. **If you have ears.** A warning to listen to Jesus and to obey his command.

The Message to Philadelphia

7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "This is the message from the one who is holy and true, who holds the key that belonged to David, who opens so that none can close, who closes so that none can open. 8 I know what you do; I know that you have a little power; you have followed my teaching and have been faithful to me. I have opened a door before you, which no one can close. 9 Listen! As for that group that belongs to Satan, those liars who claim that they are Jews, but are not, I will make them come before you and bow down at your feet. They will all know that I love you. 10 Because you have kept my order to be patient, I will also keep you safe from the time of trouble which is coming upon the whole world, to test all the people on earth. 11 I am coming soon. Keep safe what you have, so that no one will rob you of your victory prize. 12 I will make him who is victorious a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never again leave it. I will write on him the name of my God, and

To the Church in Philadelphia

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 7
 These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens, no one can shut; and what he shuts, no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him 10 9 11 12

7. **To the angel of the church in Philadelphia.** To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20*. **Who holds the key.** A key opens and shuts. Christ has the authority to do this. He has the power of David's throne (*Isa. 22:22; Matt. 16:19; 28:18; Rev. 5:5; Acts 15:15-18*).

8. **I know what you do.** Christ knows their living faith and their spiritual strength. **I have opened a door.** Symbolic of great opportunities (compare *Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3*).

9. **Listen! As for that group.** Bitter opposition from those who claim to be Jews. (See note on *Rev. 2:9*.) **I will make them come.** Victory over the opposition. Also, some of these who fight against them will come to Christ and join in praising him.

10. **Because you have kept.** They lived their faith (compare *James 2:14-26*). They continued to proclaim the gospel. **I will also keep you safe.** A promise of Divine protection. Note that it goes hand in hand with "Keep safe what you have" in the next verse. The "time of trouble" comes on the earth again and again, to test people and to call them to turn to God. (Compare *Rev. 16:10-11; Acts 17:30; 2 Pet. 3:9*.)

11. **I am coming soon.** His promise. Jesus comes in judgment through his angels (*Rev. 1:1*). He will come in person at the Second Coming (*Rev. 1:7*).

12. **I will make him.** The victory prize is to be permanently with God! See *Psalms 27:4*. **In the temple.** The church of Christ (*Eph. 2:22*). **I will write on him.** When one enters Christ's church, the spiritual

the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from my God. I will also write on him my new name.

¹³“If you have ears, then, listen to what the spirit says to the churches!”

The Message to Laodicea

¹⁴“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

“This is the message from the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is the origin of all that God has created. ¹⁵I know what you have done; I know that you are neither cold nor hot.

How I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶But because you are barely warm, neither hot nor cold, I am going to spit you out of my mouth!

¹⁷“I am rich and well off,” you say, “I have all I need.” But you do not know how miserable and pitiful you are! You are poor, naked, and blind.

¹⁸I advise you, then, to buy gold from me, pure gold, in order to be rich. Buy also white clothing to dress yourself and cover up your shameful nakedness. Buy also some medicine to put on your eyes, so that you may see. ¹⁹I reprove and punish all whom I love. Be in earnest, then, and

the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. He who has an ear, let him ¹³hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Laodicea

“To the angel of the church ¹⁴in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, ¹⁵

that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because ¹⁶

you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

You say, ‘I am rich; I have ¹⁷acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are

wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to ¹⁸buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and

salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Those whom I love I ¹⁹reprove and discipline. So be

temple on earth, three names are written on him [*Father, Son, Holy Spirit - Matt. 28:19*]. When he enters the Eternal temple, three names are written on him [*the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, my new name (Jesus speaking)*].

13. If you have ears. Listen carefully to the words of promise!

14. To the angel of the church in Laodicea. To the evangelist. See note on *Rev. 1:20. The Amen.* See *2 Cor. 1:20*.

15. I know what you have done. Sardis was sinking into death, but Laodicea was already dead spiritually. Christ has no word of praise for them. They are barely warm (tepid). They are not hostile to Christ, but neither do they love him.

16. I am going to spit you out of my mouth. Symbolic of intense disgust!

17. I am rich and well off. They had lots of money and a very high standard of living. But they had mistakenly substituted this for spiritual wealth. [They were a success by the world’s standards.] **You are poor, naked, and blind.** This was how God saw them.

18. I advise you. A call to turn to Christ! **Gold.** Symbolic of true wisdom (*Col. 2:3*). **White clothing.** Symbolic of union with Christ (*Matt. 22:11-13; Gal. 3:27*). **Medicine.** Symbolic of being able to “see” the truth (*1 John 2:20*), and of “removing blindness.”

19. I reprove and punish all whom I love. As a father spans his children to teach them (*Heb. 12:5-11*).

turn from your sins. ²⁰Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him and he will eat with me. ²¹To those who win the victory I will give the right to sit by me on my throne, just as I have been victorious, and now sit by my Father on his throne. ²²"If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!"

earnest, and repent. Here I ²⁰ am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, he with me.

To him who overcomes, I ²¹ will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He ²² who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Worship in Heaven

4 At this point I had another vision, and saw an open door in heaven.

And the voice that sounded like a trumpet, which I had heard speaking to me before, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this." ²At once the Spirit took control of me. There in heaven was a throne, with someone sitting on it. ³His face gleamed like such precious stones as jasper and carnelian; all around the throne there was a rainbow the color of an emerald. ⁴In a circle around the throne were twenty-four other thrones, on which were seated twenty-four elders dressed in white and

The Throne in Heaven

4 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the ² Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And ³ the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the ⁴ throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four el-

20. Listen! I stand at the door and knock. Christ is always knocking at the door, but they must turn from sin and open the door to him. Faith and turning from sin are man's action. These are Christ's own people, but they have forgotten him and are being called to renewal.

21. To those who win the victory. The promise is available! *Sit by me.* Share his rule (*compare 1 Cor. 6:2-3*). **Just as I have been victorious.** He has already defeated Satan (*Heb. 12:2*).

22. If you have ears, then. A grim word of warning; but also a promise!

Trial and Persecution. Chapters 4 - 7. (*John 16:33*)

BACK TO FIRST COMING OF CHRIST

Chapters 4 - 7 begin with the First Coming and deal with the church being persecuted and tested in the world. Jesus says: "But be brave! I have defeated the world!" (*John 16:33*).

Chapter 4 relates to God and Creation. The central idea is that God's throne [his authority, sovereignty, etc.] is the **ABSOLUTE CENTER** of the Universe, and that he is **IN CONTROL**!

1. I had another vision. John is given a series of visions in this book. **An open door in heaven.** So that he can see how God looks at our entire Universe! **Come up here.** To the throne as it appears in the vision! Note that chapters 4 & 5 teach **ONE MAIN LESSON** - "*Jehovah reigns; let the peoples tremble!*"

3-6. God's throne is the spiritual center of the universe. Words can only hint at his glory! **Jasper.** A diamond - *white, brilliant* - symbolic of holiness. **Carnelian.** A topaz - *bloody red* - symbolic of judgment and wrath. **Rainbow.** Symbolic of the storm ending! God's promise ending! through Christ (*compare Rom. 8:28*). **Twenty-four elders.** Symbolic of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments. They are

wearing gold crowns. ⁵From the throne came flashes of lightning, sounds, and peals of thunder. There were seven lighted torches burning before the throne; these are the seven spirits of God. ⁶In front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

Surrounding the throne, on each of its sides, were four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back. ⁷The first living creature looked like a lion; the second looked like a calf; the third had a face like a man's face; and the fourth looked like a flying eagle. ⁸Each one of the four living creatures had six wings, and they were covered over with eyes, inside and out. They never stop their singing day or night:

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, who is, and who is to come."

⁹The four living creatures sing songs of glory and honor and thanks to the one who sits on the throne who lives forever and ever. When they do so, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before the one who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives forever and ever. They throw their crowns before the throne, and say,

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11 "Our Lord and God! You are worthy to receive glory, honor, and power. For you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life."

The Scroll and the Lamb

5 I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who sat on the throne; it was covered with writing on both sides, and was sealed with seven seals. ²And I saw a mighty angel, who announced in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³But no one was found in heaven, or on earth, or in the world below, who could open the scroll and look inside it. ⁴I cried bitterly because no one had been found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside it. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, "Don't cry. Look! The Lion from Judah's tribe, the great descendant of David, has won the victory and can break the seven seals and open the scroll."

"You are worthy, our Lord 11 and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being,"

The Scroll and the Lamb

5 Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." 2
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Chapter 5 relates to God's Lamb (Jesus Christ) and his work of "*buying men for God*." The last two verses of this chapter are the praise of the total Universe, joined together in worship to God and the Lamb.

1. **Scroll.** This is symbolic of God's Eternal Plan - his purpose for the total Universe throughout history. [Books in ancient times, were made by gluing together pages to form a sheet many feet in length. These were rolled up for storage.] **Sealed.** Scrolls were sealed to prevent unauthorized use. These were often arranged so that breaking the first seal would allow access to the first part. Then a second seal would have to be broken to give access to further material. The SEALED scroll symbolizes God's Plan *undisclosed* and *unexecuted*.

2. **Who is worthy?** Only someone with authority could break the seals.

3. **But no one was found.** No one, man or angel, had the authority to break the seals and execute God's Plan.

4. **I cried bitterly.** John, *in the vision*, feels the dismay of Creation as God's Scroll remains sealed.

5. **Then one of the elders.** Not an angel, but an elder (*Rev. 4:4*), speaks the good news! **Look!** Jesus Christ has won the victory! He is the "Lion from Judah's tribe" (*Gen. 49:9-10*); and "the great descendant of David" (*Isa. 11:1-10; Matt. 22:41-45*). He won the victory through his death (*Luke 9:31*).

⁶Then I saw a Lamb standing in the center of the throne, surrounded by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb appeared to have been killed. It had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God that have been sent into all the world. ⁷The Lamb went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who sat on the throne. ⁸As he did so, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each had a harp, and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. ⁹They sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to break open its seals.

For you were killed, and by your death
you bought men for God,
from every tribe, language, nation, and
race.

¹⁰You have made them a kingdom of
priests to serve our God,
and they shall rule on earth."

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take
the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you
purchased men for God
from every tribe and
language and people
and nation.

You have made them to
be a kingdom and
priests to serve our
God,
and they will reign on the
earth."

6. **Then I saw a Lamb.** Not the Lion, but the Lamb. **Center of the throne.** This shows both the authority of Jesus, and the authority of his act of sacrifice on the Cross. **Seven horns,** Symbolic of his authority. **Seven eyes.** Symbolic of the Holy Spirit (*Rev. 1:4; Eph. 2:22*).

7-8. **The Lamb went and took the scroll.** The sovereignty of both heaven and earth is given into his hands! [*See Heb. 1 & 2; Phil. 2:6-11.*] **As he did so.** As he takes the scroll and is made King of Creation, there is a great burst of praise from the four living creatures [Creation] and the twenty-four elders [God's people in all ages of time]. **Harp.** Symbolic of great happiness (*compare Rev. 18:22*). **Gold bowls.** Symbolic of prayer and thankfulness.

9-10. The praise of the created and the Redeemed! **By your death.** The bloody death of the Cross is the PRICE of buying men [men and women] for God (*Rev. 1:6*). **A kingdom of priests.** In Christ's kingdom (*Col. 1:13*) everyone is a priest. Christ himself is *the* high priest. Alford (Greek Testament) says: "The present *BASILEUOUSIN* [*they shall rule*] is not to be rendered as a future, but keeps its own meaning (the whole aspect and reference of this heavenly vision being not *future*, but *present*: the world and church as now existing, *compare Eph. 2:6*)." Those who are bought for God: (1) are made into a Kingdom; (2) become priests; (3) receive kingly authority. These things are true, even though God's people are persecuted and insulted.

¹¹Again I looked, and I heard angels, thousands and millions of them! They stood around the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders, ¹²and sang in a loud voice,

“The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, and strength, honor, glory, and praise!”

¹³And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, and in the world below, and every creature in the sea—all creatures in the whole universe—and they were singing,

“To him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise and honor, glory and might, forever and ever!”

¹⁴The four living creatures answered, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Seals

6 Then I saw the Lamb break open the first of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice that sounded like

Then I looked and heard ¹¹ the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they ¹² sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature ¹³ in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

The four living creatures ¹⁴ said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Seals

6 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thun-

11. **Again I looked.** Still a vision. The angels of heaven join the Created and the Redeemed to praise Jesus.

12. **And sang in a loud voice.** They sing the praises of Jesus for his *act of death* which sets men free from the results of sin. Christ demonstrated that he is “worthy” by his heroic sacrifice (*Eph. 3:8-11*).

13. **And I heard every creature.** Every being joins in the chorus of praise to God and the Lamb! It is God’s act in Jesus the Lamb, which allows God to give the verdict of “not guilty” in regard to those who were “paid for” by the death of Christ. The total Universe shares in the benefits of this act (*Rom. 8:20-21; Col. 1:20*).

14. **Amen.** The four living creatures place their seal of approval on the worship. **And the elders.** They, too, fall down to worship the Triune God, and especially the Lamb. [It was a custom in the ancient world to fall down with the face pressed to the ground as a sign of submission and worship.]

In chapters 6 & 7, the Lamb who took the sealed scroll (*Rev. 5:7*), now begins to open the seals and to disclose a sequence of events.

1. **Then I saw.** The Lamb breaks open the first of the seals. **Come.** The four living creatures (cherubim) take turns introducing a horseman.

thunder, "Come!" ²I looked, and there was a white horse. Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown. He went out as a conqueror to conquer.

³Then the Lamb broke open the second seal; and I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴Another horse came out, a red one. Its rider was given the power to bring war on the earth, that men should kill each other; he was given a large sword.

⁵Then the Lamb broke open the third seal; and I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there was a black horse. Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶I heard what sounded like a voice coming from among the four living creatures. It said, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages. But do not damage the olive oil and the wine!"

der, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

2. **There was a white horse.** The Rider on the white horse symbolizes Christ. [This is still a vision.] The bow, the crown, and the white horse, are symbolic of conquest and victory. **As a conqueror to conquer.** Christ is a conqueror (*Rev. 3:21*). He has already conquered death and the world of the dead (*Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18*). Compare the Rider in *Rev. 19:11ff*: Christ stands among his gold lampstands (*Rev. 1:12ff*), and this can be taken as symbolic of his conquest through his church. It is the church (the messianic community) which is commanded to: "Go!" (*Matt. 28:19-20*).

3-4. **Another horse came out.** This horse is red - symbolic of violent death. As the Good News of Jesus is preached, persecution and sacrifice follow. Read what Jesus said in *Matt. 10:34-39*. The red horse refers to religious persecution stirred up by preaching Christ. The sword here is the sacrificial knife which was used to kill the animal on the Jewish altar (*compare Heb. 9:12ff*). "Kill" as used here means to "slaughter as a sacrifice." The world slaughters the people of God as a sacrifice [they don't intend it that way] to God, which he accepts as praise to him (*Rev. 13:9-10; 14:13*).

5-6. **There was a black horse.** Symbolic of great economic hardship. The scales are symbolic of famine (*Ezek. 4:10ff*), and the prices given for wheat and barley are famine prices. But it is not famine, since plenty of wheat and barley are available *if you can pay the price!* Oil and wine symbolize luxury here, but these people can barely buy the cheapest food. Who are they? - The Christians. See note on *Rev. 2:20; 13:17*. The second and third Riders belong together. As soon as the Good News of Christ is preached, the world will persecute the church in every way. The two forms mentioned here: *slaughter* and *economic hardship* - are symbolic of every form of persecution.

⁷Then the Lamb broke open the fourth seal; and I heard the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸I looked, and there was a pale colored horse. Its rider was named Death, and Hades followed close behind. They were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with war, famine, and disease, and with the wild animals of earth.

⁹Then the Lamb broke open the fifth seal. I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because they had proclaimed God's word and had been faithful in their witnessing. ¹⁰They shouted in a loud voice, "Almighty Lord, holy and true! How long will it be until you judge the people of earth and punish them for killing us?" ¹¹Each of them was given a white robe; and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the total number was reached of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed, as they had been.

¹²And I saw the Lamb break open the sixth seal. There was a violent earthquake, and the sun became black, like coarse black cloth, and the

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood-red, and

7-8. **There was a pale-colored horse.** This horse is a very sickly gruesome color, symbolic of disease and death. Its Rider is Death, and Hades (the world of the dead) comes trotting along behind. War, famine, disease and wild animals come on believer and unbeliever alike. Death cuts down, and Hades [symbolizing disembodied spirits of the dead (see notes on *Luke 16:22-23*)] seizes them. To the believer, this punishment is helpful (*Heb. 12:5-11*); but to the nonbeliever, it is a curse, because they do not turn from their sins (*Rev. 9:20-21*).

9. **Then the Lamb broke open the fifth seal.** This is still a vision. I saw . . . the souls. He sees an altar, and under it the souls (not bodies) of those who were being slaughtered under the second seal. Their lives were both a sacrifice and a testimony to Christ.

10. **How long?** These souls shout in a loud voice, asking for vengeance! But did not Jesus ask God to forgive those who killed him? We answer, these souls do not ask for revenge, but they ask God's vengeance for God's sake. By slaughtering them, the world repudiates God! See *Jude 14-15*.

11. **They were told to rest.** A white, flowing robe is given to each of them (symbolic of being free from guilt, of being holy, and of great happiness). God hears their prayers, but his purpose is not yet fulfilled. God knows the exact number of martyrs to his cause, and not until this many are sacrificed to him, will our world come to an end.

12-14. **And I saw the Lamb break open the sixth seal.** The sixth seal introduces the Judgment, and shows us something of the terror of the wicked at that time. The events of verses 12, 13, 14 are to be

moon turned completely red, like blood. ¹³The stars fell out of the sky to earth, like unripe figs falling from the tree when a strong wind shakes it. ¹⁴The sky disappeared, like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place. ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the rulers and the military chiefs, the rich and the mighty, and all other men, slave and free, hid themselves in caves and under rocks on the mountains. ¹⁶They called out to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the eyes of the one who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷The great day of their wrath is here, and who can stand up against it?"

the stars in the sky fell to 13 earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky reced- 14 ed like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the kings of the 15 earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the 16 mountains and the rocks: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the 17 great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

The 144,000 People of Israel

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind should

144,000 Sealed

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any

lumped together around the central idea of God's wrath and power *unleashed* [at Christ's Second Coming] against the world of wicked people. Compare *Ezekiel 38:19; Amos 8:8; Joel 2:10*.

15-16. **Then the kings of the earth, etc.** Under the symbolism of six groups of men, John sees [in his vision] the total godless world in terror as they will attempt to escape from God's wrath. As the very earth shakes to pieces beneath their feet, even death itself seems less to be feared than the wrath of the Lamb who comes in Judgment (*Rev. 1:7*). Suffering Christian, you have no reason to be afraid of all this! **THE LAMB IS YOUR KING AND YOUR FRIEND!**

17. **The great day of their wrath is here.** Chapter 6 closes with Judgment Day, but the seventh seal is not yet opened! God sends punishment on the world in our day [or at least allows it to come] because the wicked persecute his people. But God will not execute his complete vengeance, nor close the door of grace, until his Plan is fulfilled and Jesus returns to begin his work of Judgment (*see Acts 17:31*).

Judgment halted for the sealing of God's people. 144,000 is symbolic of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments.

1. **After this I saw four angels.** Two events are presented in this chapter: the sealing of God's people [symbolic of ownership; protection; genuineness]; and the gathering of God's people in the Eternal World. Chapter six ends with Judgment ready to begin. As chapter seven opens, four angels (symbolic of the total agencies of destruction) are standing at the four corners of the earth (symbolic of the total Creation: North, South, East, West) holding back the four winds (symbolic of punishment, destruction, anguish), just about to release them to do their work of vengeance.

blow on the earth, the sea, or any tree. ²And I saw another angel coming up from the east with the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels to whom God had given the power to damage the earth and the sea. ³The angel said, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees, until we mark the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads." ⁴And I was told the number of those who were marked with God's seal on their foreheads: it was 144,000, from every tribe of the people of Israel. ⁵There were 12,000 from the tribe of Judah marked with the seal; 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben; 12,000 from the tribe of Gad; ⁶12,000 from the tribe of Asher; 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali; 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh; ⁷12,000 from the tribe of Simeon; 12,000 from the tribe of Levi;

tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. he called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

From the tribe of Judah	5
12,000 were sealed,	
from the tribe of Reuben	
12,000,	
from the tribe of Gad	
12,000,	
from the tribe of Asher	6
12,000,	
from the tribe of Naphtali	
12,000,	
from the tribe of	
Manasseh 12,000,	
from the tribe of Simeon	7
12,000,	
from the tribe of Levi	
12,000,	
from the tribe of Issachar	
12,000,	

2-3. **And I saw another angel.** This angel has the seal of the living God [which shows he is acting on God's instructions]. He puts into effect a "hold" on Judgment until all God's people are sealed. A "seal" identifies ownership; protects against tampering; certifies genuineness. One who is a Christian is sealed by the death of Christ (he bought us for God and we share his death - *Rom. 6:3-4*); is certified by the Holy Spirit as to genuineness (*Rom. 8:16*); and has the Father's protection throughout this life.

4. **And I was told the number.** John does not see the number, he hears it! 144,000. Numbers have symbolic meanings [this was especially true with the ancient peoples]. This number (144,000) is formed by multiplying 3 (the Trinity) by 4 (the total Creation, because the redeemed come from the "four corners" of the world), which makes 12. This number (12) becomes the symbol of the Father acting through the Son in the Spirit to set men free from their sins ($3 \times 4 = 12$). To show God's people in both the Old and New Testaments, we multiply 12 times 12 (12 Tribes; 12 Apostles) to get 144. Then to emphasize that it is the total number of God's people, not just a small part, we multiply 144 by 1,000! [$1,000 = 10 \times 10 \times 10$ symbolic of perfect completeness.] This number 144,000 represents the total Church Militant in both the Old and New Testaments [all those who do in fact belong to God]. The Church Militant is the messianic community of believers, at work in this world (First Seal). [The Redeemed in the Old Testament are included in this number, although not actually part of the church which Jesus built. However, they will share in the promise (*Heb. 11:39-40*).]

5-8. **There were 12,000.** Exactly 12,000 are sealed from 12 tribes to make 144,000. This cannot be the Jews (in the flesh). (1) The Ten Tribes had disappeared in Assyria and lost their identity. (2) Judah and Benjamin had lost their national existence and all the records destroyed, in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem [some 25 years before John writes this]. (3) The Tribes are arranged out of sequence. Judah is put first, not Reuben. Dan and Ephraim are omitted. There was no Tribe of Joseph, but his

12,000 from the tribe of Issachar; ⁸12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun; 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph; and 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin.

The Great Crowd

⁹After this I looked, and there was a great crowd—no one could count all the people! They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood in front of the throne and of the Lamb, dressed in white robes, and holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, “Our salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb!” ¹¹All the angels stood around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures. Then they fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying, “Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and might belong to our God forever and ever! Amen!”

from the tribe of Zebulun 8
12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph
12,000,
from the tribe of Benjamin
12,000.

The Great Multitude in White Robes

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And ¹⁰they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: ¹²

“Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks
and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and
ever.
Amen!”

sons Ephraim and Manasseh each founded a Tribe (*Gen. 48:5*). Levi is also counted to make 12, but as the priestly Tribe had no inheritance (*Num. 2:33*), to count Levi would have made 13 Tribes: (4) Christ did away with the distinction of race (*Gal. 3:23-29; Eph. 2:14-18*). (5) 144,000 is mentioned again in *chapter 14*, where they are all: men [males]; unmarried; virgin. This is clearly symbolic (see notes on *Rev. 14:3-5*).

9. **And there was a great crowd.** This time John sees the Church Triumphant [God's people in Eternity] as they live forever in the presence of God and his Throne. Notice that the Redeemed in Eternity are a Great Crowd, so many of them that they cannot be counted! **THE WORK OF CHRIST IS NOT A FAILURE!** They are from EVERY race, tribe, nation, and language (see *Col. 1:23*). All those Jews who accepted Christ are included in this number (compare *Acts 21:20*). **White robes.** Symbolic of being free from guilt, of being holy, and of great happiness. **Palm branches.** Symbolic of happiness after a victory.

10. **Our salvation.** They shout their praise to God and to the Lamb. Note they look to GOD AND CHRIST as the source of their salvation.

11-12. **All the angels.** The chorus of heaven and Creation joins in the song of the Redeemed, as they praise God and the Lamb (compare *Rev. 5:11*).

¹³One of the elders asked me, "Who are these people dressed in white robes, and where do they come from?"

¹⁴"I don't know, sir. You do," I answered.

He said to me, "These are the people who have come safely through the great persecution. They washed their robes and made them white with the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵That is why they stand before God's throne and serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will protect them with his presence. ¹⁶Never again will they hunger or thirst; neither sun nor any scorching heat will burn them; ¹⁷because the Lamb, who is in the center of the throne, will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Then one of the elders ¹³ asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

I answered, "Sir, you ¹⁴ know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There- ¹⁵ fore,

they are before the throne of God

and serve him day and night in his temple;

and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

Never again will they ¹⁶ hunger;

never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat upon them,

nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center ¹⁷ of the throne

will be their shepherd;

he will lead them to

springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

¹³. **One of the elders asked me.** He asks this to focus John's attention on the great crowd of people.

¹⁴. **I don't know, sir. You do.** John's answer shows that he is eager to know the answer.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷. **These are the people.** The words of the elder form the close to this section [chapters 4 - 7]. Remember the central idea of this section is: "*Jehovah reigns; let the peoples tremble!*" The theme of this section is: *the church being persecuted and tested in the world.* What the elder says is the *inspired interpretation* of the GREAT CROWD. These people are the Church Triumphant, who have kept their faith during persecution, and who have "graduated" from Earth. Now they are assembled in Eternity, never to leave the presence of God and the Lamb. They have washed their flowing white robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (*1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:14; Rom. 6:3-11*). **Springs of living water.** Water symbolizes eternal life and salvation (*Isa. 55:1; John 7:38-39*). Springs of water symbolize the source of life which they have through the Lamb, and the eternal companionship with the Father. **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.** "*He will annihilate death for all time; and the Lord, the Eternal, will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the shame of His people He will remove from the whole earth; because the Eternal has said this.*" [*Isaiah 25:8*. Zamenhof's version of the Masoretic Text].

The Seventh Seal

8 When the Lamb broke open the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God; they were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel, who had a gold incense container, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to add to the prayers of all God's people and offer on the gold altar that stands before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the burning incense went up with the prayers of God's people from the hands of the angel standing before God. ⁵Then the angel took the incense container, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it on the earth. There were peals of thunder, sounds, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

The Trumpets

⁶Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer

8 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. 2

Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. 3
4
5

The Trumpets

Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. 6

Church Victorious! Chapters 8-11 (Luke 18:7)

In this section of chapters, we again return to the First Coming of Christ. The Seals [of persecution] bring Trumpets [warning of Judgment] which bring Bowls [of judgment poured out]. Chapter 8 is God's pledge of destruction on unbelievers. It shows God's vengeance through the ages of time - by the medium of natural disasters. The first four Trumpets are sent by God as a warning! *Notice that the Seals, Trumpets, Bowls of Wrath, and similar symbols, refer to Principles - of man's conduct and God's discipline - that are at work throughout history. The events symbolized by the Trumpets may be seen any day of the year in any part of the earth. Therefore, Trumpets are simultaneous with Seals.*

1-2. **Silence in heaven.** The hush of silence is to emphasize the things which are about to happen. **Then I saw.** John did not see the silence, but he sees the seven angels. They are given seven Trumpets to warn the unbelievers on earth.

3-4. **Another angel.** Before the Trumpets are blown, another angel comes. He has a gold incense container, and he is given much incense to add to the prayers of all God's people. Christ is our "go-between" at the Father's right side, and he pleads with God for his people. The Holy Spirit is "ANOTHER Helper" (John 14:16) here on earth, and he adds to our prayers by "pleading with God for us" (Rom. 8:26). **The smoke . . . went up.** The prayers of God's people go up to the Throne of God! The One on the Throne both sees and knows the suffering and the praise of his children on earth.

5. **And threw it on the earth.** God has heard the prayers, and the judgments to come are his answer to them. **Peals of thunder, etc.** This is to show that this is God's decree.

6. **Prepared to blow them.** To carry out God's decree. This is serious warning, but not final doom. Note that Trumpets affect a *third of the earth* - but not the whole earth.

⁷The first angel blew his trumpet. Hail and fire, mixed with blood, came pouring down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees, and every blade of green grass.

⁸Then the second angel blew his trumpet. Something that looked like a large mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea was turned into blood, ⁹a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰Then the third angel blew his trumpet. A large star, burning like a torch, dropped from the sky and fell on a third of the rivers, and on the springs of water. ¹¹(The name of the star is Bitterness.) A third of the water turned bitter, and many men died from drinking the water, because it had turned bitter.

¹²Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet. A third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that their light lost a third of its brightness; there was no light during a third of the day and during a third of the night also.

The first angel sounded 7
his trumpet, and there came
hail and fire mixed with
blood, and it was hurled
down upon the earth. A third
of the earth was burned up,
a third of the trees were
burned up, and all the green
grass was burned up.

The second angel sounded 8
his trumpet, and something
like a huge mountain, all a-
blaze, was thrown into the
sea. A third of the sea turned
into blood, a third of the liv- 9
ing creatures in the sea died,
and a third of the ships were
destroyed.

The third angel sounded 10
his trumpet, and a great star,
blazing like a torch, fell from
the sky on a third of the
rivers and on the springs of
water—the name of the 11
star is Wormwood. A third
of the waters turned bitter,
and many people died from
the waters that had become
bitter.

The fourth angel sounded 12
his trumpet, and a third of
the sun was struck, a third
of the moon, and a third of
the stars, so that a third of
them turned dark. A third of
the day was without light,
and also a third of the night.

7. **Hail and fire, mixed with blood.** These came pouring down. Symbolic of destructive land disasters, which our Lord sends against those who persecute his church. *All* land disasters should be viewed in this light.

8. **A large mountain burning with fire.** That is what it looked like. This is symbolic of destructive disasters in which God uses the *sea* as a tool of vengeance. We are to interpret *all* disasters involving the sea in the light of this.

10. **A large star, burning like a torch.** It drops from the sky to show that it is God's act. It may be the Devil who inflicts these things, but God allows it and God sends it against those who persecute his people (the messianic community). Now the *land waters* (lakes, rivers, etc.) are used as a tool of vengeance. The star's name is **Bitterness** - symbolic of the bitter sorrow which these disasters bring to wicked people. [Perhaps such things as pollution and shortages, including all sorts of problems, can be thought of as part of this third Trumpet.]

12. **Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet.** The heavens themselves become tools to be used against the enemies of Christ's church! All disasters which have their origin in space are included here.

¹³Then I looked, and I heard an eagle that was flying high in the air say in a loud voice, "O horror! horror! How horrible it will be for all who live on earth when the sound comes from the trumpets that the other three angels must blow!"

9 Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet. I saw a star which had fallen from the sky to earth; it was given the key to the abyss. ²The star opened the abyss, and smoke poured out of it, like the smoke from a large furnace; the sunlight and the air were made dark by the smoke from the abyss. ³Locusts came down out of the smoke upon the earth, and they were given power like that of scorpions. "They were told not to harm the grass, or the trees, or any other plant; they could harm only the men who did not have the

As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in mid-air call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

9 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their

13. I heard an eagle. Four angels have blown. Now there is a short intermission. The eagle is a bird of prey (symbolic of violence and destruction). The next three Trumpets will be more horrible than the first four!

The fifth and sixth Trumpets are brought by Satan, not God. Yet God can use even the Devil's work to punish and to warn the wicked.

1. I saw a star. The star is Satan (*Luke 10:18 "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."*). **Which had fallen.** The Devil rebelled against God, lost his holiness, his position in heaven, and his glory. **Was given the key.** In the vision John sees the authority to release the forces of evil given to Satan.

2. Opened the abyss. This is "hell" before the Judgment. After Judgment hell is the "lake of fire" (*Rev. 20:14-15*). **Were made dark by the smoke.** Satan opens the abyss and fills the world with demons and evil influence. The society of men is "darkened" by the moral and spiritual wickedness created through Satan's influence.

3. Locusts came down. Compare *Joel 1:7-12*. Locusts look like a giant grasshopper. A swarm of locusts drops down out of the sky, like smoke, darkening the sun-light, falling on the farmer's fields and quickly stripping every leaf off the growing plants. Locusts, then, symbolize destruction, grief, hopelessness, despair. Locusts are just the right symbol for John to use to describe the forces of evil which pour out from the abyss, bringing horror and destruction. This kind of locust does not harm the grass, or trees, or any plant. They can only harm those who do not have God's seal. God's people are sealed (*Rev. 7:1-8*), and have the promise: "he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power to resist" (*1 Cor. 10:13*).

mark of God's seal on their foreheads. ⁵The locusts were not allowed to kill these men, but only to torture them for five months. The pain caused by their torture is like the pain a man suffers when stung by a scorpion. ⁶During the five months those men will seek death, but will not find it; they will want to die, but death will flee from them.

⁷The locusts looked like horses ready for battle; on their heads they had what seemed to be gold crowns, and their faces were like men's faces. ⁸Their hair was like women's hair, their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹Their chests were covered with what looked like iron breastplates, and the sound made by their wings was like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots rushing into battle. ¹⁰They have tails and stings, like those of a scorpion, and it is with their tails that they have the power to hurt men for five months. ¹¹They have a king ruling over them, who is the angel in charge of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon; in Greek the name is Apollyon (meaning "The Destroyer").

foreheads. They were not 5
given power to kill them, but
only to torture them for five
months. And the agony they
suffered was like that of the
sting of a scorpion when it
strikes a man. During those 6
days men will seek death,
but will not find it; they will
long to die, but death will e-
lude them.

The locusts looked like 7
horses prepared for battle.
On their heads they wore
something like crowns of
gold and their faces resem-
bled human faces. Their hair 8
was like women's hair, and
their teeth were like lions'
teeth. They had breastplates 9
like breastplates of iron, and
the sound of their wings was
like the thundering of many
horses and chariots rushing
into battle. They had tails 10
and stings like scorpions and
in their tails they had power
to torment people for five
months. They had as king 11
over them the angel of the
Abyss, whose name in He-
brew is Abaddon, and in
Greek, Apollyon.

5. **Not allowed to kill these men.** God has placed a limitation on these evil spirits who operate in the hearts and lives of evil men and women. They are destructive, horribly so, yet they can torture, but not kill. **The pain caused by their torture.** The scorpion has a poisonous sting in its tail, and its sting is extremely painful, and sometimes fatal.

6. **During the five months.** Verses 6-10 give a symbolic picture of these "locusts from the abyss." Do not try to "pick apart" the symbol of the locusts [what is the *separate* meaning of the hair, teeth, breastplates, etc.]. We look at these verses as a "whole" - a symbolic picture giving one central meaning. The details belong to the picture *as a whole*. What more frightening, horrible, and *true* picture could be painted, of the powers of evil at work in the world of men? Here are demons, stealing the light from those who do not know God [who do not *want* to know God]. They take away love and good will; joy and peace; common sense and knowledge. They cause mankind to bring terror and destruction upon each other. They bring political and social chaos [think of the Red Guards in China; the French Revolution, etc.]. Man's inhumanity to man is the source of incredible misery and suffering!

11. **They have a king.** Their king is the angel in charge of the abyss. His name is given in Hebrew and Greek - meaning "the Destroyer." This entire symbolic picture shows one central idea: terror-panic-destruction! That is Satan's work. [In view of this, think about what Paul wrote: "He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). See also Eph. 6:12.]

¹²The first horror is over, after this there are still two more horrors to come.

¹³Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet. I heard a voice coming from the corners of the gold altar standing before God. ¹⁴The voice said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!" ¹⁵The four angels were released; they had been prepared for this very hour of this very day of this very month and year, to kill a third of all mankind. ¹⁶I was told the number of the mounted troops: it was 200 million. ¹⁷And in my vision I saw the horses and their riders: they had breastplates red as fire, blue as sapphire, and yellow as sulfur. The horses' heads were like lions' heads, and from their mouths came out

The first woe is past; two 12 other woes are yet to come.

The sixth angel blew his 13 trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth 14 angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four 15 angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the 16 mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.

The horses and riders I 17 saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire,

12. **The first horror is over.** It is over in John's vision. See *verses 20-21*.

13. **Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet.** As this angel blows, a voice is heard *coming from the corners of the gold altar standing before God*. In *Rev. 8:3-4*, we saw the incense and the prayers of God's people go up from the altar to the Throne of God. Here, the answer to those prayers is spoken of as coming from the "corners of the gold altar." God uses the work of the Devil to bring *warning of judgment or warning judgments* on wicked men.

14. **Release the four angels.** These are evil angels. Note they have been **bound** at the great river. [The four angels of *Rev. 7:1* are good angels, who "stand at the four corners of the earth."] As these evil angels are released, the same powers of evil that do the work of destruction in the hearts and lives of men, change these wicked men into *devils* (so to speak). In times of war, wicked people lose the thin veneer of morality and civilization [the atrocities of any war show this]. The sixth Trumpet paints a picture of war; not one specific war, but **ALL WAR** - past, present, and future. The four evil angels are pleased with the idea of plunging all mankind into war. Yet they cannot act unless God permits [they were *bound*! Let us keep in mind, that in allowing them to be released, God uses even war as a voice calling for the wicked to repent (compare *verses 20-21*). [The Trumpets of *Revelation 9* answer the question: "How can a loving God allow pain and suffering?" To the Christian who suffers in pain, this is a Seal (compare *Rev. 7:2-3 note*); but to the unbeliever, this pain and suffering is a Trumpet of warning!] **The great river Euphrates.** This symbolizes Assyria and Babylon, therefore, the entire wicked world.

15-18. **The four angels were released.** War is in God's decree (even though it is Satan who actually brings it); and the hour, day, month, and year are fixed. These angels are allowed to kill one third of all mankind - horrible, yet limited. John sees *in the vision* the armies on the battlefield. There are so many troops he cannot count them, but he is told there are **200 million** (a symbolic number); and these mounted troops and horses have but one purpose - to destroy! In the vision, the mounted troops and the horses work together so well, that the colors of the breastplates and the fire, smoke, and sulphur coming from the horses' mouths, match each other. **Fire**, symbolic of destruction. **Sapphire**, symbolic of suffering. **Sulphur**, symbolic of torture. These symbolize the destructive machines of war, the bombs etc., the defoliating chemicals, poison gas, etc. - all the things which man uses to kill each other in battle.

fire, smoke, and sulfur. ¹⁸A third of mankind was killed by those three plagues: the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur coming out of the horses' mouths. ¹⁹For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and also in their tails. Their tails are like snakes, with heads, and they use them to hurt people.

²⁰The rest of mankind, all those who had not been killed by these plagues, did not turn away from what they themselves had made. They did not stop worshiping the demons and the idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see, hear, or walk. ²¹Nor did those men repent of their murders, their magic, their immorality, or their stealing.

The Angel and the Little Scroll

10 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down out of heaven. He was dressed in a cloud, with a rainbow around his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like columns of fire. ²He had a small scroll open in his hand. He put his right foot on the sea, his left foot on the land, ³and called out in a loud voice that sounded like the roar of lions. After he had called out, the seven thunders answered back with a

smoke and sulfur. A third of 18 mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of 19 the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

The rest of mankind that 20 were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did 21 they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

The Angel and the Little Scroll

10 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud ² shout like the roar of a lion. ³ When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.

20-21. **The rest of mankind.** From this we see that the general meaning of these six Trumpets is clear. During the period of time which began with Christ's first Coming, and extends all the way to his Second Coming, our Lord Jesus Christ who is ruling all things as he is authorized by the Scroll of God's Decree (Rev. 5:7), will again and again punish those who persecute his church, by allowing [inflicting] disasters on every part of their life - both physical and spiritual. [But disasters in the Christian's life do not indicate punishment, as Jesus points out in *Luke 13:1-5*] **Nor did those men repent.** Man in general ignores the warning voices! Stubborn, foolish, man continues to violate the commandments of God by worshiping false gods (*verse 20*), and hating his fellow-man (*verse 21*). The un-repentance of mankind brings the Bowls of wrath poured out (*chapters 15 & 16*), and the final Day of Judgment. Delay is no longer possible!

¹1-3. **Then I saw another mighty angel.** To announce the third and final horror (the Final Judgment), another angel appears. The symbolism shows he is to be closely associated with Christ (*see Rev. 1:7; 4:3; 1:17; 1:15*). Note that John does not worship this angel as he does Christ. **Cloud:** authority, judgment. **Rainbow:** mercy and promise for God's people. **Sun:** God's power and holiness. **Fire:** fierce destruction. **A small scroll:** the Gospel - the Good News of what Jesus has done. He stands on the sea and land and shouts! What he has to say concerns the whole Universe and must be heard by everyone. **The seven thunders answered back.** Thunder is God's voice (*see Psalm 29:1-5*).

roar. "As soon as they spoke, I was about to write. But I heard a voice speak from heaven, "Keep secret what the seven thunders said: do not write it down!"

"Then the angel that I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and made a vow in the name of God, who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and all things in it, the earth and all things in it, and the sea and all things in it. The angel said, "There will be no more delay! But when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, then God will accomplish his secret plan, as he announced to his servants, the prophets."

"Then the voice that I had heard speaking from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go and take the open scroll which is in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and on the land."

"I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me. "Take it and eat it; it will turn sour in your stomach, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

"I took the little scroll from his hand and ate it, and it tasted sweet as honey in my mouth. But after I had swallowed it, it turned sour in my

And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my

4. **Keep secret what the seven thunders said.** There are things at work in both the present and the future which are not revealed to us. Seven is the Divine number, and these seven thunders are God's instruments working out his Plan.

5-6. **Then the angel.** He acts as God's agent. **There will be no more delay!** The Final Judgment is ready to come! God's secret Plan (*1 Cor. 2:9-10*) will reach its total completeness in the Final Judgment. Then will God's people be given their final reward and inheritance, just as God promised. [Note that the "apparent delay" in *Rev. 10:8 to 11:13* is not "time on the clock," but describes our present world from the viewpoint of the work of the church.

8. **Go and take the open scroll.** John is told to take the scroll, which is the Good News about Jesus. Notice that it is *open*, not sealed. Its message is for all peoples.

9. **It will turn sour in your stomach.** The Gospel (Good News) is a thing of beauty and "sweet as honey." But the "sour taste" of persecution follows it.

10. **But after I had swallowed it.** Not only must John (and each Christian) understand and digest the message of the Good News; he (and we) must live it and experience it (*Eph. 2:10*). But this very persecution brings new opportunities to speak for Christ (*Luke 21:12-19*).

stomach. ¹¹Then I was told, "Once again you must speak God's message about many nations, races, languages, and kings."

stomach turned sour. Then 11 I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

The Two Witnesses

11 I was then given a measuring stick, like a rod, and told, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count those who are worshiping in the temple. ²But omit the outer courts of the temple. Do not measure them, because they have been given to the heathen, who will trample on the Holy City for 42 months. ³I will send my two witnesses, dressed in sackcloth; and they will proclaim God's message during those 1,260 days."

The Two Witnesses

11 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to

⁴The two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lamps that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes

11. **Once again.** Not "to," but "about." John is old, perhaps one hundred years old, as he receives this vision. There is more for John to record, so that all down the stream of history, believers will "hear" John speak God's message [Read the "Key" to Revelation in the introduction.]

Bitter Persecution. John now speaks about the "sour" experiences which come to the church of Christ when the "sweet" Gospel is preached.

1. **I was given a measuring stick.** To "measure" is symbolic of *setting apart, making secure, clearly identifying*. [This is still a vision. The fact that there is no temple in Jerusalem when he writes this, is not important.] **Count those who are worshiping in the temple.** These are God's people - the true church. They will suffer severely, but they will never lose God's promise - if they hold firmly to their faith! [Compare *1 Thess. 3:3*.]

2. **But omit the outer courts.** Symbolic of the "nominal Christian," who is an unfaithful *church member*, but not really one of Christ's people. John sees *earthly Jerusalem* and the *earthly* temple. The outer courts have been given to the heathen (unbelievers). **42 months.** 42 months = 1,260 days = 3½ years [time, times, and half a time] = the entire Gospel Age, from Pentecost to the Second Coming. This period of time is symbolic of God's church being persecuted, yet not destroyed. Compare *James 5:17; Rev. 11:6; 1 Kings 17:1 to 18:10*.

3. **I will send my two witnesses.** [The two witnesses are the Church Militant.] Jesus sent his disciples out two by two (*Luke 10:1*). Two witnesses symbolize the *outreach* [missionary spirit] of the messianic community in taking the "sacred and ever-living message of eternal salvation" to the whole world, **1,260 days**. The Gospel Age (see note on verse 2). **The church judges the world.** Compare *James 5:17-18*.

4-6. **The two witnesses are the two olive trees.** The *two olive trees* symbolize *evangelism* - the outreach of the messianic community. The *two lamps* symbolize the *fellowship* within the messianic community. Compare *Zech. 4*. God blesses his people through the preaching of the word [evangelism] and through the fellowship within the messianic community. In a very real sense, the messianic community is a "COLONY OF HEAVEN!" **If anyone tries to harm them.** God hears and answers the prayers of his perse-

out of their mouths and destroys their enemies; and in this way whoever shall try to harm them will be killed. ⁶They have authority to shut up the sky so that there will be no rain during the time they proclaim God's message. They have authority also over the springs of water, to turn them into blood; they have authority also to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they wish.

⁷When they finish proclaiming their message, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will fight against them. He will defeat them and kill them, ⁸and their bodies will lie on the street of the great city, where their Lord was nailed to the cross. The symbolic name of that city is Sodom, or Egypt. ⁹People from all nations, tribes, languages, and races will look at their bodies for three and a half days, and will not allow them to be buried. ¹⁰The people of earth will be happy over the death of these two. They will celebrate, and send presents to one another, because those two prophets brought much suffering upon the

harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. ⁸Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three, ⁹and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of ¹⁰the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

cuted people. (*Rev. 8:3-5*). The church may seem to be weak and helpless, but God's power backs them up! Whoever fights against the church of Christ will be destroyed by the fire that comes out of the mouths of the two witnesses. Symbolic, but no less real! The Trumpets of chapters 8 & 9 can be thought of as the church's judgment on the world. **They have authority.** A blessing, when rejected, turns into a curse! One who rejects the Good News of God's ACT in Christ to save men, brings God's curse upon himself (*compare 1 Thess. 2:16*). **ARMAGEDDON - the cycle of the church.** Originally a royal canaanite city, on a hill guarding an important mountain pass. Many battles were fought there. Solomon built fortifications there. King Josiah was killed there (*2 Chron. 35:22-27*), and the Jews held a special memorial service for him each year. As a symbol, Armageddon represents *fierce struggle*. In Revelation we meet this "battle of Armageddon" four times: *Rev. 11:7-13; 16:12-21; 19:19-21; 20:7-10*.

7-10. **The beast . . . will fight against them.** *In the vision*, a beast comes up out of the *abyss* [hell before the Judgment], fights against the two witnesses, defeats them and kills them. This is Satan, working through the entire anti-christian world. He defeats the church of Christ, and their dead bodies lie on the street. Earthly Jerusalem symbolizes the anti-christian forces of Satan. **Sodom** symbolizes *immorality*. **Egypt** symbolizes *slavery*. **The people of the earth will be happy.** They think that by silencing the voice of the church of Christ, they have freed themselves from God's power. They think they can do as they please, without any messianic community to "judge them" and bring suffering upon them because of their sins.

people of earth. ¹¹After three and a half days a life-giving breath came from God and entered them, and they stood up; all who saw them were terribly afraid. ¹²Then the two prophets heard a loud voice say to them from heaven, "Come up here!" As their enemies watched, they went up into heaven in a cloud. ¹³At that very moment there was a violent earthquake; a tenth of the city was destroyed, and 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake. The rest of the people were terrified and praised the greatness of the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second horror is over; but look! The third horror will come soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

¹⁵Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The power to rule over the world belongs now to our Lord and his Messiah, and he will rule

But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

11-14. **After three and a half days.** The two witnesses [the Church Militant] is "dead" only a short time. The world is happy too soon! God sends a life-giving breath, and they stand up! The wicked are terribly afraid! **Come up here!** God honors them by calling them to *come up* to where he is. **They went up into heaven in a cloud.** They go up in the same way that their Lord went up (*Acts 1:9*). **A violent earthquake.** Symbolic of God's judgment on the wicked. Compare *Rev. 6:12-17*. **CENTRAL IDEA.** Verses 7-13 show a continuing cycle of events. Satan himself fights against the church of Christ [through the anti-christian world] and destroys it. But after 3½ days, God sends a life-giving breath into it. The church *seems* to die, and is *reborn*, AGAIN AND AGAIN! The church does not terminate. It is taken up to God and continues to be with him forever, in the eternal Wedding Feast of the Lamb (*Rev. 19:7-9*). God's purpose in the First Coming of Jesus, is stated in *John 3:16-17*.

15-18. **Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet.** This *introduces* the End of the World and the Final Judgment, *but does not describe it!* The loud voices in heaven announce: "The power to rule over the world belongs now to our Lord and his Messiah, and he will rule forever and ever!" Compare *1 Cor. 15:24-28*. It may seem as if Satan is the supreme ruler, and that all the power is on the side of the forces of evil. Revelation shows us that God is in control now! Judgment will reveal God's mighty power as it

forever and ever!" ¹⁶Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell down on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying:

"Lord God Almighty, who is and who was!

We thank you that you have used your great power and have begun to rule!

¹⁸The heathen were filled with rage, because it is the time for your wrath to come, and for the dead to be judged.

It is the time to reward your servants, the prophets, and all your people, all who fear you, great and small alike.

It is the time to destroy those who destroy the earth!"

¹⁹God's temple in heaven was opened, and the box holding the covenant was seen in his temple. Then there were flashes of lightning, sounds, peals of thunder, and earthquake, and heavy hail.

The Woman and the Dragon

12 Then a great mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a woman, whose dress

actually is!!! **Then the twenty-four elders.** Symbolic of the Redeemed. They respond to what the loud voices announced by falling down [see note on *Rev. 5:14*] and worshiping God. **And have begun to rule!** God has been ruling all along, but not in ways clearly seen. As Judgment begins, all opposition is crushed forever! **Because it is the time.** It has not been the right time, up till now. **To reward your servants.** God keeps his promises! Compare *Rev. 22:12*. **It is the time to destroy those who destroy the earth!** Sin pays its wage. The wicked *earn* the punishment they will receive. Compare *Rev. 18:6*.

19. God's temple in heaven was opened. This *symbolic picture* shows the beauty of God's love to his children. The *temple* is *wide open* so all can see the *box holding the covenant*. That *box* symbolizes the real and perfect *union* [fellowship of *1 John 1:7* given real meaning] of God and his people. **Flashes of lightning.** The same *box holding the covenant* is symbolic of God's wrath to those who have rejected him. The lightning, sounds, thunder, earthquake, and hail symbolize God's mighty power brought in wrath against the ungodly (*compare Jude 15*).

Christ and The Dragon. Chapters 12-14. (*Gen. 3:15*)

This is the fourth parallel section, and we again return to the First Coming of Christ. "And I will place hostility between you and the woman and between your children [IDARO] and her children [IDARO]; he will crush your head, and you will strike at his heel." [*Gen. 3:15. Zamenhof*]

1. **Then a great mysterious sight appeared in the sky.** *In the vision*, the woman is symbolic of God's

And the twenty-four elders, 16 who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: 17

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

Then God's temple in 19 heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the sacred chest of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The Woman and the Dragon

12 A great and wondrous sight appeared in heav-

was the sun and who had the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was soon to give birth, and the pains and suffering of childbirth made her cry out.

³Another mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and a crown on each of his heads. ⁴With his tail he dragged a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them to earth. He stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, in order to eat her child as soon as it was born. ⁵Then the woman give birth to a son, who will rule over all nations with an iron rod. But the child was snatched away and taken to God and his throne. ⁶The woman fled to the desert, to a place God had prepared for her, where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days.

⁷Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who fought

en: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with a rod of iron. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and

people in both the Old and New testaments. At the right time, Jesus is born of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law (*Gal. 4:4*). There is a continuity between the Jewish church and the church of Christ (*see Heb. 9:15*). *Verses 1-6* form one central idea - *God's act in history!* **The sun:** the New Testament [the Christian system]. **The moon:** The Old Testament [the Law]. **Twelve stars:** the twelve apostles. **To give birth:** The Incarnation [Christ taking human form]. **The pains and suffering:** compare *Isa. 66:5-12*.

3. **Another mysterious sight appeared in the sky.** In the vision, the huge red dragon is Satan. The seven heads, ten horns, and the crowns are a lot like those of the beast in *Rev. 17*. [Compare notes there. These can be understood as symbolic of the Roman Empire, but Satan uses all the governments of the world against Christ and his church.]

4. **With his tail.** Symbolic of the great power this dragoon has! [*See Eph. 2:1-3; 6:10-13.*] **In order to eat her child.** *Matt. 2* helps us understand this. Satan, acting through Herod, has the male children of the Bethlehem area, two years old and under, *killed*. But Christ lives on, in Egypt. [Satan tries in every generation to destroy God's people, but he is unable to do it!]

5. **Then the woman gave birth.** The whole earthly life of Jesus. **Who will rule.** Compare *Luke 19:27*. **But the child was snatched away.** Christ being taken up to heaven to sit on his throne. See *Rev. 5:7; Phil. 2:9*.

6. **The woman fled to the desert.** Symbolic of the fact that Satan cannot destroy God's people 1,260 days. See note on *Rev. 11:2*.

7. **Then war broke out in heaven.** The central idea of *verses 7-12* is that Christ's atonement [God's act in Christ to set men free] frustrates the Devil. Note that Michael and his angels do the attacking. The dragon is defeated and expelled from heaven. See notes on *Rev. 20:1-3*.

back with his angels; ⁸but the dragon was defeated, and he and his angels were not allowed to stay in heaven, any longer. ⁹The huge dragon was thrown out! He is that old serpent, named the Devil, or Satan, that deceived the whole world. He was thrown down to earth, and all his angles with him.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now God's salvation has come! Now God has shown his power as King! Now his Messiah has shown his authority! For the accuser of our brothers, who stood before God accusing them day and night, has been thrown out of heaven.

¹¹Our brothers won the victory over him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the truth which they proclaimed; and they were willing to give up their lives and die. ¹²And so be glad, you heavens, and all you that live there! But how terrible for the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, and he is filled with rage, because he knows that he has only a little time left."

¹³When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he began to pursue

his angels fought back. But ⁸he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon ⁹was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Then I heard a loud voice ¹⁰in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.

For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

They overcame him ¹¹by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony;

they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Therefore rejoice, you ¹²heavens and you who inhabit them!

But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you!

He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

When the dragon saw that ¹³he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the

10. **Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying.** The picture John has seen in *verses 7-9* is now explained by what he hears. Satan has been "thrown out of heaven" in the sense that he has lost his place as the "accuser of our brothers." Compare *Rom. 8:33-34*. **Now God's salvation has come!** This is the first effect of Christ's atonement.

11. **Our brothers won the victory!** This is the second effect. The blood of the Lamb, and the Truth of the Good News, permit escape from the "law of sin and death" (*Rom. 8:1-4*).

12. **For the Devil has come down.** This is the third effect. Satan is filled with rage because time is running out and he has already lost the fight! He wants to do as much harm as he can, before he is thrown into the "lake of fire" (*Rev. 20:10*).

13. **He began to pursue the woman.** *Verses 13-18* form the third "picture." The central idea is that the Devil will now direct his fury against the messianic community.

the woman who had given birth to the boy. ¹⁴She was given the two wings of a large eagle in order to fly to her place in the desert, where she will be taken care of for three and a half years, safe from the serpent's attack. ¹⁵And then from his mouth the serpent poured out a flood of water after the woman, so that it would carry her away. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the water that had come from the dragon's mouth. ¹⁷The dragon was furious with the woman, and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus. ¹⁸And the dragon stood on the seashore.

The Two Beasts

13 Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with

male child. The woman was ¹⁴ given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times, and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. Then ¹⁵ from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped ¹⁶ the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Then the dragon was enraged ¹⁷ at the woman, and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

13 And the dragon stood ¹ on the shore of the sea.

14. **To fly to her place in the desert.** Symbolic of divine protection. That is, the Lord gives his people such strength that they can be faithful even to the point of death! **Three and a half years.** See note on *Rev. 11:2*.

15. **The serpent poured out a flood of water.** Symbolic of words and language. Here it means: Lies, false doctrines, false ideologies. These are all things which hinder the spread of the Good News.

16. **But the earth helped the woman.** Symbolic of the great masses of people. Even though Satan is able to use them against the church, they also *defeat* Satan's purpose by "swallowing up" the "water" from his mouth.

17. **Against the rest of her descendants.** Satan makes his attack against individual Christians, hoping to "pick them off one by one." See note on *Acts 6:13-14*. Christians are to know that during this Gospel Age which stretches from Pentecost until the Second Coming, both good and bad will come to God's people. Satan will send persecution and lies against the messianic community, and against each Christian. But God's special help prevents the Devil from attacking the church directly and destroying it! Satan is to be allowed one last all-out effort to destroy the church (*Rev. 20:7-10*), and this may parallel the persecution of the first century. But we already know the outcome! Satan has already lost! And the Second Coming will put a stop to his final effort. [Some think a period of explosive growth will take place in the church of Christ at the exact same time that Satan is permitted to make his last effort. History shows that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."]

18. **And the dragon stood on the seashore.** This introduces the next chapter, as Satan produces agents to do his work. Since he himself cannot attack the church directly, he raises up *anti-christian powers* [human agencies] through whom he works *indirectly*.

The Devil produces agents to do his work. First is the beast from the sea. Second, the beast from the earth. The first beast is horrible to look at. The second looks harmless, which makes it the more dangerous of the two. A third agent is identified in Rev. 14:8, Great Babylon the Prostitute.

1. **Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea.** We learn from *Rev. 17* that this beast is symbolic of

a crown on each of its horns, and a wicked name written on its heads. ²The beast I saw looked like a leopard, with feet like a bear's feet, and a mouth like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave the beast his own power, his throne, and his vast authority. ³One of the heads of the beast seemed to have been killed, but the fatal wound had healed. The whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast. ⁴All people worshiped the dragon because he had given his authority to the beast. They worshiped the beast also, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?"

⁵The beast was allowed to say terribly wicked things, and it was permitted to have authority for

The Beast out of the Sea

And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-

anti-christian world powers [governments]. **Ten horns:** destructive power. **Seven heads:** universal authority and rule [in this world]. The *crowned horns* do not symbolize victory, but rather show that this "universal authority" has been arrogantly seized.

2. **The beast I saw.** Three well known animals are mentioned here: each symbolic of swiftness, crushing power, eagerness to destroy. **The dragon gave the beast his own power.** Those in nations and governments who persecute the church of Christ, receive their power and their motivation from the dragon, Satan. [Note that the same Roman government could serve both God and Satan. We see Rome symbolized in the "seven heads and ten horns." Yet read what Paul says in *Rom. 13:1-7*.]

3. **But the fatal wound had healed.** Remember this was directed to the believers in John's day. The seven heads represent seven empires that follow each other in history (*Rev. 17:10*). [Old Babylon; Assyria; New Babylon; Medo-Persia; Macedonia; Rome; etc.] The beast symbolizes all anti-christian empires. The head that seemed to have been killed, but had healed, must mean that one of these empires which had been fiercely persecuting the church, had stopped doing this, but after a time, had started the persecution again. Rome fits this pattern. Emperor Nero nailed Christians to posts, poured oil on them and burned them as torches to amuse the mob. But in 68 A.D., Nero killed himself. For a few years, Rome was "dead" as a persecuting power. But then in the last years of the first century, Domitian began the persecution again (*Rev. 1:9*).

4. **They worshiped the beast also.** At the time when John lived, Roman Emperors demanded that people call them "Lord" and "Savior." See notes on *verses 15-16*.

5. **To have authority for 42 months.** Satan works through the governments of this world throughout the entire Gospel Age. The governments seize power that belongs only to God, and they blaspheme God, heaven, and all God's people. They are allowed to defeat God's people [it seems that way, but see *Rev. 11:9-13*]. Every tribe, nation, language, and race will worship anti-christian government and place their trust in it. Compare *Rev. 11:7*.

42 months. ⁶It began to curse God, his name, the place where he lives, and all those who live in heaven. ⁷It was allowed to fight against God's people and to defeat them, and it was given authority over every tribe, nation, language, and race. ⁸All people living on earth will worship it, that is, everyone whose name has not been written, before the world was created, in the book of the living that belongs to the Lamb that was killed.

⁹"Listen, then, if you have ears to hear with! ¹⁰Whoever is meant to be captured, will surely be captured; whoever is meant to be killed by the sword, will surely be killed by the sword. This calls for endurance and faith on the part of God's people."

¹¹Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb's horns,

two months. He opened his ⁶ mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was ⁷ given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and ⁸ nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been recorded in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

He who has an ear, let ⁹ him hear.

If anyone is to go into cap- ¹⁰ tivity, into captivity he will go.

If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed.

This calls for patient endur-
ance and faithfulness on the
part of the saints.

The Beast out of the Earth

Then I saw another beast, ¹¹ coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.

8. **Before the world was created.** "God stands at the close of history and looks back on the future as though it had already happened!" He can know every choice which we will make, without interfering with our free will. Compare John 6:44-45; 2 Thess. 2:13-14.

9-10. **Whoever is meant to be.** Persecution is part of God's decree (Rev. 6:9-11; 1 Thess. 3:3). One who understands this will patiently bear his load, *expecting* to receive God's blessing! When the world used the "sword" against the messianic community, God himself will avenge them.

11. **Then I saw another beast.** The beast from the sea is the Devil's "hands." This beast from the earth is the Devil's "mind." **Like a lamb's horns.** This beast is the *false prophet* (Rev. 16:13; 19:20). Some have applied this specifically to the Roman church. This is a mistake. This second beast symbolizes all false religion and all false philosophy in every form during the entire Gospel Age. It is the Devil's counterfeit of the "true Lamb of God." It is not one individual, or one religion; but an *attitude*. [In the church of Christ itself, two different attitudes have struggled together since the very beginning. One "distorts" the Good News and leads away from God (see Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Thess. 2:7). The other points back to God's perfection. Men such as the apostles opposed any distortion of the teachings of Christ, and pointed all to the "perfect law that sets men free" (James 1:25).]

and it spoke like a dragon. ¹²It used the vast authority of the first beast in its presence. It forced the earth and all who live on it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³This second beast performed great miracles; it made fire come down out of heaven to earth, in the presence of all men. ¹⁴And it deceived all the people living on earth by means of the miracles which it was allowed to perform in the presence of the first beast. The beast told all the people of the world to build an image in honor of the beast that had been wounded by the sword, and yet lived. ¹⁵The second beast was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and put to death all those who would not worship it. ¹⁶The beast forced all men, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, to have a mark placed on their right hands and on their foreheads. ¹⁷No one could buy or sell unless he had this mark, that is, the beast's name or the number that stands for the name.

He exercised all the author- ¹²
ity of the first beast on his
behalf, and made the earth
and its inhabitants worship
the first beast, whose fatal
wound had been healed.
And he performed great and ¹³
miraculous signs, even caus-
ing fire to come down from
heaven to earth in full view
of men. Because of the signs ¹⁴
he was given power to do on
behalf of the first beast, he
deceived the inhabitants of
the earth. He ordered them
to set up an image in honor
of the beast who was wound-
ed by the sword and yet
lived. He was given power ¹⁵
to give breath to the image
of the first beast, so that it
could speak and cause all
who refused to worship the
image to be killed. He also ¹⁶
forced everyone, small and
great, rich and poor, free
and slave, to receive a mark
on his right hand or on his
forehead, so that no one ¹⁷
could buy or sell unless he
had the mark, which is the
name of the beast or the
number of his name.

12. It used the vast authority. A union of "church and state." Anti-christian religion uses the power of anti-christian government. The Roman Empire and the heathen priest worked hand in hand to persecute the Christians.

13. It made fire come down. Tricks and false-miracles to "sell" people the State Religion. Also, since "fire" can symbolize the Holy Spirit, this can refer to what seem to be "outpourings of the Spirit." The Devil does not mind people being religious, just as long as he can turn them away from God. See *Matt. 24:24*. **To build an image.** This is "emperor worship" in all its forms. Compare note on *Rev. 2:13*. Images [idols, fetishes] were actually made in honor of the Roman Emperor, and worshiped. Whoever refused to bow down to the Emperor's fetish, or refused to say: "The emperor is Lord," was killed. *But this is symbolic of the new "corporate image" formed by the alliance of religion and government.*

15-16. Allowed to breath life into the image. We see the "unholy alliance" of anti-christian religion and anti-christian government working together to make slaves out of people. When people can be fooled into believing their *leader* [emperor, dictator, chariman, king, etc.] is a "god," they give themselves as willing slaves. The mark of the beast is the *spirit* of anti-christ (*1 John 2:18-19*) which shows itself in individuals by their "God-opposing, Christ-rejecting, persecuting attitude." Contrast this with the "seal" placed on the forehead of the believer (*Rev. 7:3*), symbolic of the "mind of Christ" (*Phil. 2:5*) which each one of the *saved* is to have. The believer has a *seal*, but the unbeliever has only a *mark*.

17. No one could buy or sell. See note on *Rev. 2:20*. Anti-christian powers discriminate against the believer who remains true to his Lord.

¹⁸This calls for wisdom. Whoever is intelligent can figure out the meaning of the number of the beast, because the number stands for a man's name. Its number is 666.

The Song of the Redeemed

14 Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion; with him were 144,000 people who have his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven that sounded like the roar of a mighty waterfall, like a loud peal of thunder. The voice I heard sounded like the music made by harpists playing their harps. ³The 144,000 stood facing the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders. They sang a new song which only they, who had been redeemed from the earth, could learn. ⁴They are the men who have kept themselves pure by not having sexual relations with women; they are virgins.

This calls for wisdom. If 18 anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the

18. Its number is 666. Not having our system of numbers, the ancients wrote numbers using letters of their alphabet. But almost any name can be added up to "666," if the letters are juggled enough. It may be that John intended this to represent the name of the Roman Emperor at that time. But since the number represents the beast's name, it is symbolic. 7 is perfect, 6 is one less than perfection. The church of Christ could be represented by 777, since it is perfect. The number of the beast is 666, *complete imperfection!* Christ's church does not terminate, but rises to Eternity to the "Feast in Heaven." The beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). Christ's church CANNOT fail! The beast has failed already! [Christians must think of themselves as being in active rebellion against Satan and all who follow him. See Eph. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; Phil. 2:12-16.]

In the last chapter, we saw Satan introduce two agents in his battle against God's people. But he had already lost, even before he began. This chapter shows the TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH!

1-5. **The Lamb standing on Mount Zion.** "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion" (Psalm 125:1) Compare Heb. 12:22; and see note on Rev. 7:9. 144,000. This is clearly a symbolic number. Note that they are all: men (males); unmarried; virgins; faultless. The voice John hears sing the new song is theirs. It sounded like: the roar of a waterfall; a loud peal of thunder; harpists playing. It is a new song that omits the trivial and the trite. It sings of a NEW EXPERIENCE! This song is about the new experience of those who have been "bought for God" (Rev. 5:9). Only those who have been set free by the imputed righteousness of Christ (Rom. 8:4) can understand the meaning of this. They have chosen to follow Christ and have kept themselves pure from sin (James 1:27). Therefore only those who have been REDEEMED from earth can learn this new song! [Avoid taking verse 4a literally! Read what Paul says in 1 Tim. 4:1-5.] From the rest of mankind. They were bought for God out of the rest of the people. The first fruits are for God, and Satan takes all the other. The Harvest of the Earth is pictured in the last part of this chapter.

They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed from the rest of mankind and are the first ones to be offered to God and to the Lamb. ⁵They have never been known to lie; they are faultless.

The Three Angels

⁶Then I saw another angel flying high in the air, with an eternal message of Good News to announce to the peoples of the earth, to every race, tribe, language, and nation. ⁷He said in a loud voice, "Fear God, and praise his greatness! For the time has come for him to judge mankind. Worship him who made heaven, earth, sea, and the springs of water!"

⁸A second angel followed the first one, saying, "She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She gave her wine to all peoples, and made them drink it—the strong wine of her immoral lust!"

⁹A third angel followed the first two saying in a loud voice, "Whoever worships the beast and its image, and receives the mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰will himself drink God's wine, the wine of his anger, which he has poured at full strength into the cup of his wrath! All who do

Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. 5

The Three Angels

Then I saw another angel 6 flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 7 "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

A second angel followed 8 and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."

A third angel followed 9 them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, 10 too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be

6-7. **Then I saw another angel.** The three angels of this section belong together. Their mission is to warn of impending doom, and to call mankind to "fear God and praise his greatness!" This is *one mission*, because the warning is also a call. God wants all mankind to turn to him! **Fear God.** All mankind is **ALREADY LOST!** No one can escape, who continues in unbelief! The Good News is that God has acted in history through Christ, and that all can now turn to him and be saved!

8. **A second angel.** The angel identifies Babylon, the third of Satan's agents. Babylon symbolizes the world as a center of anti-christian seduction [the glamour, glitter, romance, etc., which leads many to "sell their soul" because they are in love with this present world (2 Tim. 4:10)]. Babylon is described more completely in chapters 17-19. **She has fallen!** So certain is the destruction of Babylon, that the angel uses the "historic future" to speak of the event as though it had already happened! This is a warning to all who love *this world!* The "*strong wine of her immoral lust*" brings only death! The Good News is that Jesus offers a way to escape the Wrath of Judgment!

9-11. **Whoever worships the beast and its image.** "If your choice is to worship Satan, you must expect to share his doom." Since hell is a place of spirits, symbolic language is used to describe the **TORMENT** that is really *indescribable!* The fact that never-ending punishment will be the fate of those who hate the Lord and persecute his church, should help strengthen the believer to go on being faithful to the

this will be tormented in fire and sulfur before the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up forever and ever. There is no relief, day or night, for those who worship the beast and its image, for anyone who has the mark of its name."

¹²This calls for endurance on the part of God's people, those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to Jesus.

¹³Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Happy are the dead who from now on die in the service of the Lord!"

"Certainly so," answers the Spirit. "They will enjoy rest from their hard work, because the results of their service go with them."

The Harvest of the Earth

¹⁴Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was a being who looked like a man, with a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵Then another angel went out from the temple and cried out in a loud voice to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap the harvest, because the right time has come; the earth is ripe for the

tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of ¹¹ their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." This calls for patient ¹² endurance on the part of the saints who keep God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

Then I heard a voice from ¹³ heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

The Harvest of the Earth

I looked, and there before ¹⁴ me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel ¹⁵ came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the

Lord. [It often looks like the Devil has it all on his side, and that he is winning. But you cannot sin and get away with it! "Pay-day" will come! If you *keep the faith*, you CANNOT lose!]

12-13. **Happy are the dead!** One of the "beatitudes" of Revelation. [See note on *Rev. 19:9*.] Those who endure are **HAPPY!** [*Happy*: no word exactly translates *MAKARIOS*. It shows *extreme happiness!*] "Suffering Christian, you may have it hard now, but don't let it discourage you!" "*And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble*" (2 *Cor. 4:17*).

14. **Then I looked.** We come again to the Final Judgment. We see a two-part harvest. **Who looked like a man.** This is Jesus. Compare note on *Rev. 1:13*. He wears a crown of gold, not thorns. The cloud symbolizes *judgment*. The sharp sickle in his hand symbolizes *harvest*.

15-16. **Use your sickle.** This is Christ's harvest. Those symbolized by this are the first-fruits [the

harvest!" ¹⁶Then the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth's harvest was reaped.

¹⁷Then I saw another angel come out of the temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

¹⁸Then another angel, who is in charge of the fire, came from the altar. He shouted in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sickle, and cut the grapes from the vineyard of the earth, because the grapes are ripe!"

¹⁹So the angel swung his sickle on the earth, cut the grapes from the vine, and threw them into the winepress of God's great anger. ²⁰The grapes were squeezed out in the winepress outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress in a flood 200 miles long and about five feet deep.

The Angels with the Last Plagues

15 Then I saw another mysterious sight in the sky, great and amazing. There were seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last ones, because they are the final expression of God's wrath.

earth is ripe." So he that ¹⁶ was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

Another angel came out ¹⁷ of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had ¹⁸ charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." The angel ¹⁹ swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. ²⁰ They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horse's bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

Seven Angels With Seven Plagues

15 I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed.

144,000 mentioned in the first section of this chapter] of earth. **Swung his sickle on the earth.** The first harvest is all the redeemed, that is, all who have reached out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make themselves part of it. [See notes on *Acts 2:37-38*.] Compare *Matt. 3:12*; *1 Thess. 4:16-17*. The Church Militant becomes the Church Triumphant! See notes on *Rev. 7:9*.

17-20. Then I saw another angel. This angel destroys all the unbelievers of earth. [This does not mean annihilation.] **He shouted in a loud voice.** Still another angel shouts to the destroying angel. These are God's orders: "Use your sickle." **Cut the grapes from the vine.** The vine symbolizes the great crowds of evil men who repudiate God. The grapes symbolize the individual unbelievers. **The grapes were squeezed out.** These who would not believe are crushed in the winepress of God's wrath. The blood comes out in a flood 200 miles long and about five feet deep to show the completeness of God's judgment of the earth. [I understand both harvests to take place at the same time. Compare *Matt. 13:36-43*; *25:31-33*.]

Christ's Final Wrath. Chapters 15-16 (*Rom. 2:5*)

This is the fifth parallel section. The central idea is: "God will not tolerate sinful men forever." It once again begins with Christ's First Coming. "But the wicked, with actions and words, have called death to themselves, and thinking it a friend, have made an agreement with it, because they choose to be part of it."

1. Then I saw another mysterious sight in the sky. Again and again we see a cycle of events in Revelation - the cycle of the church. The Holy Spirit produces faith in the hearts of people through the preach-

²Then I saw what looked like a sea of glass, mixed with fire. I also saw those who had won the victory over the beast and its image, and over the one whose name is given by a number. They were standing by the sea of glass, holding harps that God had given them. ³They were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

"Lord, God Almighty,
how great and wonderful are your
deeds!
King of all nations,
how right and true are your ways!
Who will not fear you, Lord?
Who will refuse to declare your great-
ness?
You alone are holy.
All the nations will come
and worship before you,
because your righteous deeds are seen
by all."

And I saw what looked like ²
a sea of glass mixed with
fire and, standing beside the
sea, those who had been
victorious over the beast and
his image and over the num-
ber of his name. They held
harps given them by God
and sang the song of Moses,
the servant of God, and the
song of the Lamb: ³

"Great and marvelous are
your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are your
ways,
King of the ages.
Who will not fear you, O ⁴
Lord,
and bring glory to your
name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your righteous acts
have been revealed."

ing of the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free. Those who believe and are baptized (*Acts 2:41*) are added to the *group* [the church: the messianic community]. The Devil fights against them through human agents, and we see that again and again, the church is persecuted [*chapters 4-7*]. We see God again and again send warning-judgments against the persecuting world [*chapters 8-11*], but these people do not repent. [Some few do.] This constant warfare between the world and the church points to the deeper conflict between the "child of the woman" [Christ] and the Dragon [*chapters 12-14*]. But, when the Trumpets of Warning fail to produce repentance, and wicked men fail to turn to God, what then? Will God close his eyes to it all until the Judgment??? *Chapters 15-16* answer this. Whenever in our world, wicked men ignore the Trumpets of Warning, the Bowls of God's Wrath are poured out! These are the Last Plagues! Death plunges these rebels, who will not accept forgiveness, into the hands of an angry God! [Notice that the same event may be a Seal to the believer; a Trumpet of Warning to the wicked; and a Bowl of Wrath to the rebel.]

2. Then I saw what looked like a sea of glass. Before John tells us about the Bowls of Wrath, he shows us the Church Triumphant in eternity. The sea of glass, mixed with fire, symbolizes God's transparent righteousness. "Because your righteous deeds are seen by all." His wrath against the rebels is righteous (see *Rev. 18:4-8*). I also saw those who had won the victory. Notice God gave them the harps they hold, symbolic of God giving the victory to his faithful servants.

3-4. They were singing the song of Moses. A song of victory and triumph! Read it in *Exod. 15:1-19*. Did not God send Trumpets of Warning again and again, pleading with the wicked to turn away from their sin??? By refusing God's mercy, they have "brought on themselves" God's Bowls of Wrath! After the Judgment, the Church Triumphant will clearly see that this is true, and they will praise God for his just punishments on the rebels.

⁵After this I saw the temple in heaven open, with the tent of God's presence in it. ⁶The seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple; they were dressed in clean shining linen, and had gold bands tied around their chests. ⁷Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven gold bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸The temple was filled with smoke from the glory and power of God, and no one could go into the temple until the end of the seven plagues brought by the seven angels.

The Bowls of God's Wrath

16 Then I heard a loud voice speaking from the temple to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth!"

After this I looked and in 5
heaven the temple, that is, 6
the tabernacle of testimony, 7
was opened. Out of the tem- 8
ple came the seven angels 9
with the seven plagues. They 10
were dressed in clean, shin- 11
ing linen and wore golden 12
sashes around their chests. 13
Then one of the four living 14
creatures gave to the seven 15
angels seven golden bowls 16
filled with the wrath of God, 17
who lives for ever and ever. 18
And the temple was filled 19
with smoke from the glory 20
of God and from his power, 21
and no one could enter the 22
temple until the seven 23
plagues of the seven angels 24
were completed. 25

The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

5. **After this I saw the temple in heaven open.** The temple is opened and the tent of God's presence shown. This tells us that the wrath which we are about to see is *God's* wrath.

6. **The seven angels.** These angels come out of the temple. The way they are dressed shows they are God's angels.

7. **Then one of the four living creatures.** One of the cherubim (see note on *Rev. 4:6*). The bowls are gold (symbolic of God's service) and they are full (showing fierceness). The time for mercy is past. Those who have rejected Christ's sacrifice will feel the full weight of God's wrath.

8. **The temple was filled with smoke.** Symbolic of the complete and thorough action of God's wrath. [Compare *Isa. 6:4; 14:31; Psalm 14:1; 18:8.*] **No one could go into the temple.** God's wrath has closed the door of mercy. No one can "plead with God" for the rebels who are about to be punished. Compare *1 John 5:16*. [This does not mean God has closed the doors to the church of Christ. Those doors were opened that Pentecost, and will not be closed until Christ's Second Coming. But those who rebel against God Almighty finally reach a place where they have used up all their opportunities. Then there is nothing left at all, but the certain vengeance of the Lord.]

1. **Go and pour out the seven bowls.** This is God's authorization for what follows. [The Bowls of Wrath are a lot like the plagues sent on Egypt (see *Exodus chapters 7-10*); and they parallel the Trumpets of Warning (*Rev. ch 8-9*). The first Trumpet (*Rev. 8:7*) affects the *earth*; so does the first Bowl (*Rev. 16:2*). The second Trumpet affects the *sea*; so does the second Bowl. The third Trumpet affects the *rivers*; likewise the third Bowl. The fourth both affect the *sun*. The fifth the pit of the *abyss* or the *throne of the beast*. The sixth the *river Euphrates*. The seventh brings in the Second Coming and the end of the world.]

²The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Terrible and painful sores appeared on those who had the mark of the beast, and on those who had worshiped its image.

³Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea. The water became like the blood of a dead person, and every living creature in the sea died.

⁴Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into blood. ⁵I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "You are righteous in these judgments you have made, O Holy One, who is and who was! ⁶They poured out the blood of God's people and of the prophets, and so you have given them blood to drink. They are getting what they deserve!" ⁷Then I heard a voice from the altar saying, "Lord, God Almighty! True and righteous indeed are your judgments!"

⁸Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to burn men with its fiery heat. ⁹Men were burned by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God, who has authority over these plagues. But they would not turn from their sins and praise his greatness.

The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.

The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.

The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say:

"You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged;

For they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve."

And I heard the altar respond:

"Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

2. Poured out his bowl on the earth. Disease (such as Acts 12:21-23); land disasters in general (see note on Rev. 8:7). Note that the Trumpets affect only a third of the earth; but the Bowls affect the whole earth!

3. Poured out his bowl on the sea. All disasters which involve the sea. (See note on Rev. 8:8.)

4. Poured out his bowl on the rivers. All disasters which come from the land waters. (See note on Rev. 8:10.)

5-7. I heard the angel. He declares the justice of what God is doing! God's people have cried out for vengeance (Rev. 6:9-11); and God heard them and promised to answer these prayers (Rev. 8:1-5).

8-9. Poured out his bowl on the sun. The fourth Trumpet brings the heavens themselves as tools to be used against the enemies of Christ's church! (See note on Rev. 8:12.) Some think Deut. 28:20-22 applies here, and that man's cruelty to each other is included in this.

¹⁰Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast. Darkness fell over the beast's kingdom, and men bit their tongues because of their pain, ¹¹and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not turn from their evil ways.

¹²Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. The river dried up, to provide a way for the kings who come from the east. ¹³Then I saw three unclean spirits, that looked like frogs, coming out of the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴They are the spirits of demons that perform miracles. These three spirits go out to the kings over the whole earth, to bring them together for the war on the great day of Almighty God.

¹⁵"Listen! I am coming like a thief! Happy is he who stays awake and takes care of his clothing, so that he will not walk around naked and be ashamed in public!"

¹⁶Then the spirits brought the kings together in the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

The fifth angel poured out ¹⁰ his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God ¹¹ of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

The sixth angel poured ¹² out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. Then I saw ¹³ three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are ¹⁴ spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

"Behold, I come like a ¹⁵ thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

Then they gathered the ¹⁶ kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

10-11. **Poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast.** This shows the incredible cruelty of man to each other. Governments fall! Political chaos brings economic depression! The throne of the beast is the center of anti-christian government. When Assyria falls, or Babylon, or Rome, the whole universe of the ungodly seems to crash down around them! Compare notes on *Rev. 9:6; Matt. 24:21*.

12-14. **Poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates.** The sixth Trumpet introduces war in general (see notes on *Rev. 9:14*). Here the Bowl brings us to Armageddon. See notes on *Rev. 11:4-10*. These verses are a picture-symbol. The river represents the wicked world. The unclean spirits look like frogs to show their hideous, repulsive nature. They represent the power and influence of hell introduced into the thoughts and actions of mankind. The kings from the east and the kings over the whole earth come together to war against the messianic community - MOTIVATED by hell itself! The central idea is Satan and the powers of hell at work in our world. But God uses the horror that war brings to warn the ungodly (Trumpet) and to punish the rebel (Bowl). Satan uses war in his attempt to destroy God's people. In the continuing cycle of Armageddon, Satan destroys his own followers by forcing them to fight against God and his church. Compare *2 Kings 19:32-36*, which is the "picture" of the final Armageddon. That final Armageddon comes just before the Second Coming. Therefore the sixth bowl is Armageddon, and the seventh bowl is the Day of Judgment. The events of the first six bowls repeat again and again, but reach their final form just before and in connection with the Last Day.

15-16. **Listen! I am coming like a thief!** At the peak of Satan's effort, Christ suddenly appears! Compare *Rev. 20:9*. The ungodly will be caught "naked" by this! As the kings come to Armageddon, the seventh bowl is poured out.

¹⁷Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl in the air. A loud voice came from the throne in the temple, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸There were flashes of lightning, sounds, peals of thunder, and a terrible earthquake. There never has been such an earthquake since the creation of man; this was the worst earthquake of all! ¹⁹The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of all countries were destroyed. God remembered great Babylon, and made her drink the wine from his cup—the wine of his furious wrath. ²⁰All the islands disappeared, all the mountains vanished. ²¹Great stones of hail, each weighing as much as a hundred pounds, fell from the sky on men. And men cursed God because of the plague of hail, because it was such a terrible plague.

The Great Prostitute

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came to me and said, "Come

The seventh angel poured 17
out his bowl into the air, and
out of the temple came a
loud voice from the throne,
saying, "It is done!" Then 18
there came flashes of light-
ning, rumblings, peals of
thunder and a severe earth-
quake. No earthquake like it
has ever occurred since man
has been on earth, so tre-
mendous was the quake.
The great city split into three 19
parts, and the cities of the
nations collapsed. God re-
membered Babylon the
Great and gave her the cup
filled with the wine of the
fury of his wrath. Every 20
island fled away and the
mountains could not be
found. From the sky huge 21
hailstones of about a hun-
dred pounds each fell upon
men. And they cursed God
on account of the plague of
hail, because the plague was
so terrible.

The Woman on the Beast

17 One of the seven
angels who had the

17. Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl in the air. Satan's last effort at crushing God's people ends before it has any chance of succeeding, as the seventh bowl brings the Judgement. **It is done!** God's decree has been carried out. The work is complete. The seventh bowl brings our world of *time* to an end. 18-21. **There were flashes of lightning.** These verses are symbolic of the *horror* of Judgment. The final collapse of Babylon is a crushing blow to all who have the mark of the beast. The earth breaking to pieces and the huge hail stones are part of the picture. The central idea is that in the final Judgment, the entire empire of evil is to be destroyed! As the great stones of hail fall *from the sky*, they symbolize the complete wrath of God directed against all the ungodly (see *Jude 14-16*). But even as they stand on the brink of hell, these ungodly rebels curse God and blaspheme him!

Christ and the Fall of Babylon. Chapters 17-19 (1 John 2:17)

This is the sixth parallel section. The central idea is: "The world and everything in it that men desire is passing away." We once again return to the First Coming. Chapter 17 shows the nature and history of the prostitute; chapter 18 shows the inevitable, complete, irrevocable downfall and ruin of her; chapter 19 shows heaven celebrating God's victory over the prostitute.

1. **Come, and I will show you.** So far five enemies of Christ have been introduced to us: the dragon (Satan); the beast from the sea (anti-christian government); the beast from the earth, who is the false prophet (anti-christian religion and philosophy); the prostitute Babylon (anti-christian seduction); and the men who have the mark of the beast (who are rebels against God). We saw the doom of those who have the mark of the beast in *chapters 15 & 16*. We will see the doom of Babylon in *Rev. 18:2*; the doom of the sea beast and the false prophet (earth beast) in *Rev. 19:20*; and the doom of the dragon (Satan) in *Rev. 20:10*. **How the great prostitute is to be punished.** Note that she is a prostitute, not an adulteress! She is not an *apostate church*, but rather *the world* as it symbolizes **LUXURY, VICE, and GLAMOUR (1 John 2:16)**.

and I will show you how the great prostitute is to be punished, that great city that is built near many rivers. ²The kings of the earth committed immorality with the great prostitute, and the people of the world became drunk from drinking the wine of her immorality."

³The Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me to a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a red beast that had wicked names written all over it; the beast had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and covered with gold ornaments, precious stones, and pearls. In her hand she held a gold cup full of obscene and filthy things, the result of her immorality. ⁵On her forehead was written a name that has a secret meaning: "The Great Babylon, mother of all prostitutes and perverts of the world." ⁶And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's people, and the blood of those who were killed because they had been loyal to Jesus.

When I saw her I was completely amazed.

seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names, and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead:

MYSTERY
BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF
PROSTITUTES AND OF THE
ABOMINATIONS OF
THE EARTH

I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was

2. **Committed Immorality.** The whole world is an idol to those who do not have the right attitude toward God. Industry, commerce, art, culture, and all the other such things can be used by the Devil to seduce people, even believers, and turn them away from God. Two people can live side by side in the same house, and look out upon two completely different worlds!

3-6. **There I saw a woman sitting on a red beast.** These verses form a picture-symbol. The red beast is the sea-beast of Rev. 13:1. It is the governments of the world as the center or focus of the spirit of persecution. The woman sits on this beast - the two work together. But do not identify this woman with the woman of Rev. 12. The two are enemies!!! This picture-symbol paints a lurid picture of those, who like Judas, sell out the Lord for *thirty pieces of silver*. This "selling out" of the Lord and persecuting his people go hand-in-hand. We said Babylon symbolizes *anti-christian seduction*. The gold cup invites you to drink, and implies something of great value. But it is full of obscene and filthy things. Some things are evil in themselves, and other things which are good can be used in evil ways. The gold cup symbolizes everything as it is used to separate people from God. Compare note on Rev. 18:4.

7 "Why are you amazed?" the angel asked me. "I will tell you the secret meaning of the woman and of the beast that carries her, the beast with seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast you saw was once alive, but lives no longer; it is about to come up from the abyss and will go off to be destroyed. The people living on earth whose names have not been written, before the world was created, in the book of the living, will all be amazed as they look at the beast. It was once alive, now it no longer lives, but it will reappear.

9 "This calls for wisdom and understanding. The seven heads are seven hills, the hills that the woman sits on. They are also seven kings: 10 five of them have fallen, one still rules, and the other one has not yet come; when he comes he must remain only a little while. 11 And the beast that was once alive, but lives no longer, is itself an eighth king who belongs to the first seven and goes off to be destroyed.

greatly astonished. Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

10 "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. 11 The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

7-8. **I will tell you the secret meaning.** The woman sits on the red beast (*verse 3*), and they are one in *purpose and intent*. Worldly people drink the wine of her immorality and experience her pleasures; and the world as a center of persecution works in close cooperation with the world as the center of luxury, anti-christian culture and pleasure. Both Babylon and the beast are "past, present, and future." Their *form* changes; their *substance* stays the same. Babylon will be destroyed and the beast will go off to be destroyed, but not until both have fooled all who do not have their name written in the book-of the living. See *Rev. 13:8*.

9-11. **The seven heads are seven hills.** Note that both the beast and Babylon ARE IN EXISTENCE as John writes this! The seven hills clearly speak of Rome, as *verse 18* also shows. Imperial Rome, center of the Empire. John sees this city filled with glamour, romance, appeal - all the things to attract kings and rulers. It was *insane* in its search for pleasure. Christians were torn to pieces to please the crowds. The prostitute was drunk with the blood of God's people (*verse 6*). **They are also seven kings.** The five who have fallen and the one who still rules can be fit into history. Old Babylonia, Assyria, New Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia - have all fallen. Rome still ruled, as John wrote this. The seventh king/kingdom which will remain only a little while is not so easy to identify with history. *Johnson* thinks it was the Eastern Roman Empire as it was revived by Justinian in the early part of the sixth century. Others identify this with Constantine the Great; still others with the Germanic nations that conquered Rome. Perhaps this seventh king/kingdom is symbolic of *all* the anti-christian world powers that will oppress God's people until the time of the Second Coming. **Is itself an eighth king.** The beast itself is the final form of world power, who will be destroyed by Christ's Second Coming. Compare *2 Thess. 2:8*. Again we say that the *forms* change but the *substance* stays the same. The beast seems to revive after every defeat (*verse 8*) but always goes off to be destroyed.

¹²“The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet begun to rule, but who will be given authority to rule as kings for one hour with the beast. ¹³These ten all have the same purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will fight against the Lamb; but the Lamb, and his called, chosen, and faithful followers with him, will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings.”

¹⁵The angel also said to me, “The waters you saw, on which the prostitute sits, are nations, peoples, races, and languages. ¹⁶The ten horns you saw, and the beast, will hate the prostitute; they will take away everything she has and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and destroy her with fire. ¹⁷For God placed in their hearts the desire to carry out his purpose, by acting with one accord and giving to the beast their power to rule, until God’s words come true.

¹⁸“The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

“The ten horns you saw 12
are ten kings who have not
yet received a kingdom, but
who for one hour will receive
authority as kings along with
the beast. They have one 13
purpose and will give their
power and authority to the
beast. They will make war 14
against the Lamb, but the
Lamb will overcome them
because he is Lord of
lords and King of kings—
and with him will be his
called, chosen and faith-
ful followers.”

Then the angel said to 15
me, “The waters you saw,
where the prostitute sits, are
peoples, multitudes, nations
and languages. The beast 16
and the ten horns you saw
will hate the prostitute. They
will bring her to ruin and
leave her naked; they will eat
her flesh and burn her with
fire. For God has put it into 17
their hearts to accomplish
his purpose by agreeing to
give the beast their power to
rule, until God’s words are
fulfilled. The woman you 18
saw is the great city that
rules over the kings of the
earth.”

12-14. The ten horns. The ten “horn-kings” who “rule as kings for one hour with the beast” symbolize all the important and influential men of every activity [art, education, commerce, industry, government, etc.] to the degree that they serve the central authority. Their goal is to honor themselves, and to do this they give their power and authority to the beast to help it fight against Christ and his church. See *verse 14*. But the Lamb and his followers constantly defeat every form of anti-christian power. It may not seem that way on the surface of things, but just when the beast seems to be winning, his doom is already there.

15-17. For God placed in their hearts. The prostitute sits on the waters, which symbolize the nations, peoples, races and languages - that are always working to oppose the church of Christ. The world in general, especially the great men of influence, drink from her gold cup and become drunk with the wine of her immorality. They carry her and give themselves to everything she has to offer. But the world, in a sense, destroys itself. The very people who make up the “anti-christian world” hate the prostitute and utterly destroy her. God is using these very rebels as his own agents. They give their power to the beast, until God’s words come true. Then they turn on her and destroy her, but it is too late! They are punished by the results of their own foolishness. Compare Judas, as he throws down the thirty pieces of silver and goes out to hang himself. Compare *Matt. 4:8-10 and notes*.

18. Is the great city. Rome. See *verse 9*.

The Fall of Babylon

18 After this I saw another angel coming down out of heaven. He had great authority, and his splendor brightened the whole earth. ²He cried out in a loud voice, "She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She is now haunted by demons and unclean spirits; all kinds of filthy and hateful birds live in her. ³For she gave her wine to all peoples and made them drink it—the strong wine of her immoral lust. The kings of the earth committed immorality with her, and the businessmen of the world grew rich from her unrestrained lust."

"Then I heard another voice from heaven, saying,

"Come out, my people! Come out from her!

You must not take part in her sins;
you must not share her punishments!

The Fall of Babylon

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: 2

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

She has become a home for demons

and a haunt for every evil spirit,

a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.

For all the nations have drunk 3

the maddening wine of her adulteries.

The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,

and the merchants of the earth grew rich

from her excessive luxuries."

Then I heard another voice 4
from heaven say:

"Come out of her, my people,

so that you will not share in her sins,

so that you will not receive any of her plagues;

The Prostitute is "The Great Babylon" - the symbol of anti-christian seduction [the glamour, romance, and appeal of this world (*1 John 2:15-17*)], at any moment of history. "Babylon" is the world as a center of industry, commerce, art, culture, etc. A WRONG ATTITUDE toward these things (compare *1 Tim. 6:10*) will cause a person to turn away from God. Babylon's FALL happens again and again throughout history, but perhaps the fall of the last Babylon [Babylon in its final form?] will be simultaneous with the Second Coming of Christ. [Anti-christian religion is symbolized by the False Prophet.]

1-3. **After this I saw another angel.** Angels are sent to announce God's decree, and to carry out his work. **Great Babylon has fallen!** Compare *Isa. 21:9; Jer. 50:2; 51:8*. The angel uses the "historic future" to speak of Babylon's coming fall as though it had already happened. The emptiness and desolation of "fallen Babylon" is described in the last half of *verse 2*. (Compare *Isa. 13:20-22; Jer. 50:39, 45; 51:37, 42; Zeph. 2:14*.) *Verse 3* gives the reason for Babylon's fall. [It is a paradox that this present world is both a blessing and a curse, serving both God and the Devil. What it is to you will be determined by your attitude toward it (*1 Tim. 6:10*).]

4. **Come out, my people.** Notice that God has people living in Babylon. God's people in all ages are commanded to *come out of Babylon*. (Compare *Isa. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:54; Zech. 2:7; 2 Cor. 2:16-18*.) Since Babylon is the World, as a center of *seduction*, God's people in all ages live right in the middle of it. To "come out" is to be pure from her sins. [Some have misunderstood this call to "come out," and dropped out of society and hidden themselves away. But the Apostles and early Christians did not do this. They continued to be an active part of society, working to turn people to Jesus Christ -

<p>⁵For her sins are piled up as high as heaven, and God remembers her wicked ways.</p>	<p>for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. 5</p>
<p>⁶Treat her exactly as she has treated you; pay her back twice as much as she has done.</p>	<p>Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. 6</p>
<p>Fill her cup with a drink twice as strong as the drink she prepared for you.</p>	<p>Mix her a double portion from her own cup. 7</p>
<p>⁷Give her as much suffering and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. For she keeps telling herself:</p>	<p>Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. 7</p>
<p>'Here I sit, a queen! I am no widow, I will never know grief!'</p>	<p>In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' 8</p>
<p>⁸Because of this her plagues will all strike her in one day, disease, grief, and famine. And she will be burned with fire, because the Lord God, who judges her, is mighty."</p>	<p>Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her. 9</p>
<p>⁹The kings of the earth who shared her immorality and lust will cry and weep over the city when they see the smoke of her burning.</p>	<p>"When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. 10</p>
<p>¹⁰They stand a long way off, because they are afraid of her suffering, and say, "How terrible! How awful! This great and mighty city Babylon! In just one hour you have been punished!"</p>	<p>her torment, they will stand far off and cry: 'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!'</p>

which then "changes the world" for that person. "When anyone is joined to Christ he is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

5. **And God remembers her wicked ways.** It may look like God has forgotten, but he has not!

6. **Pay her back twice as much.** She deserves what she will receive!

7. **For she keeps telling herself.** In the vision, Babylon is proud and arrogant. (Compare Isa. 14:13-14; 47:8; Jer. 50:29.)

8. **Because of this.** Because she is proud and boastful, her plagues will all strike her in one day (symbolic of sudden, complete destruction). The Lord God, whom she has opposed, is very strong!

9-10. **The kings of the earth.** The kings (men of influence) cry and weep when they see her destroyed. They shared her immorality and enjoyed her luxuries. Notice they stand a *long way off* because they are afraid.

¹¹The businessmen of the earth also cry and mourn for her because no one buys their goods any longer; ¹²no one buys their gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; their goods of linen, purple cloth, silk, and scarlet; all kinds of rare woods, and all kind of objects made of ivory and of expensive wood, of bronze, iron, and marble; ¹³and cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, and frankincense; wine and oil, flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and carriages, slaves and even men's souls. ¹⁴The businessmen say to her, "All the good things you longed to own have disappeared, and all your wealth and glamor are gone, and you will never find them again!" ¹⁵The businessmen, who became rich from doing business in that city, will stand a long way off, because they are afraid of her suffering. They will cry and mourn, ¹⁶and say, "How terrible! How awful for the great city! She used to dress herself in linen, purple, and scarlet, and cover herself with gold ornaments, precious stones, and pearls!" ¹⁷And in one hour she has lost all this wealth!"

All the ship captains and passengers, the sailors and all others who earn their living on the sea, stood a long way off, ¹⁸and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "There never

"The merchants of the 11
earth will weep and mourn
over her because no one buys
their cargoes any more—
cargoes of gold, silver, pre- 12
cious stones and pearls; fine
linen, purple, silk and scar-
let cloth; every sort of citron
wood, and articles of every
kind made of ivory, costly
wood, bronze, iron and mar-
ble; cargoes of cinnamon 13
and spice, of incense, myrrh
and frankincense, of wine
and olive oil, of fine flour
and wheat; cattle and sheep;
horses and carriages; and
bodies and souls of men.

"They will say, 'The fruit 14
you longed for is gone from
you. All your riches and
splendor have vanished,
never to be recovered.' The 15
merchants who sold these
things and gained their
wealth from her will stand
far off, terrified at her tor-
ment. They will weep and
mourn and cry out: 16

'Woe! Woe, O great city,
dressed in fine linen, pur-
ple and scarlet,
and glittering with gold,
precious stones
and pearls!

In one hour such great 17
wealth has been
brought to ruin!

"Every sea captain, and all
who travel by ship, the sail-
ors, and all who earn their
living from the sea, will stand
far off. When they see the 18
smoke of her burning, they
will exclaim, 'Was there ever
a city like this great city?'

11-16. **The businessmen of the earth.** The businessmen cry and mourn, because their goods have suddenly become worthless! Most of the list of goods are luxuries for a pleasure-mad world! These include *slaves and even men's souls*. Fortunes have been made through the "seduction of the world." Notice these businessmen stand *long way off* because they are afraid.

17-19. **All the ship captains.** Those who make their fortune by the sea (exporters, importers, fishermen, pearl-divers, etc.). They throw dust on their heads as a sign of sorrow and grief. **And in one hour she has lost everything.** Babylon's fall happens again and again throughout history. The fall of Babylon brings economic chaos! The unbeliever has built his trust and his hope on the things which Babylon symbolizes (the luxuries and pleasures of this world). The world, as it is now, changes (*1 Cor. 7:29-31*). The wicked trust only in material things, and, when Babylon falls, they fall with it! (*Compare Luke 12:16-21.*)

has been another city like the great city!"¹⁹ They threw dust on their heads, they cried and mourned, saying, "How terrible! How awful for the great city! She is the city where all who have ships sailing the seas become rich on her wealth! And in one hour she has lost everything!"

²⁰Be glad, heaven, because of her destruction! Be glad, God's people, and the apostles and prophets! Because God has judged her for what she did to you!

²¹Then a mighty angel picked up a stone the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "This is how the great city Babylon will be thrown down with violence, and will never be seen again. ²²The music of harpists and musicians, of players of the flute and the trumpet, will never be heard in you again! No workman in any trade will ever be found in you again; and the sound of the millstone will be heard no more! ²³Never again will the light of a lamp be seen in you; no more will the voices of bride and groom be heard in you. Your businessmen were the most powerful in all the world, and with your false magic you deceived all the people of the world!"

They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out:

'Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth!

In one hour she has been brought to ruin!

Rejoice over her, O heaven!

Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you."

Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:

"With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.

The music of harpists and musicians,

flute-players and trumpeters,

will never be heard in you again.

No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again.

The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again.

The light of a lamp will never shine in you again.

The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again.

Your merchants were the world's great men,

By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.

20. **Be glad!** The world makes God's people suffer (see note on Rev. 2:20). God will judge the world in vengeance! He does this again and again by making Babylon fall.

21-23. **Then a mighty angel.** The large stone is *thrown down* to the bottom of the sea where no one can retrieve it! This is symbolic that Babylon will be found "never again!" [God continually judges "society" because "society" persecutes and harms God's people.] **False magic.** Compare *Isa. 47:9-15*. The "glamour, romance, gold, and appeal" of this world are a "false magic," but don't forget that "witchcraft, voodoo, fortune-telling, etc.," turn people from God, and make vast fortunes for some.

²⁴Babylon was punished because the blood of prophets and of God's people was found in the city: yes, the blood of all those who have been killed on earth.

19 After this I heard what sounded like the loud voice of a great crowd of people in heaven, saying, "Praise God! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God! ²True and righteous are his judgments! He has condemned the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her immorality. God has punished her because she killed his servants." ³Again they shouted, "Praise God! The smoke from the burning of the great city goes up forever and ever!" ⁴The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, and said, "Amen! Praise God!"

The Wedding Feast of the Lamb

⁵Then there came from the throne the sound of a voice, saying, "Praise our God, all his servants, and all men, both great and small, who

In her was found the blood 24
of prophets and
of the saints,
and of all who have been
killed on the earth."

Hallelujah!

19 After this, I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

"Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and
power belong to our God,
for true and just are his
judgments. 2

He has condemned the
great prostitute
who corrupted the earth
by her adulteries.
He has avenged on her the
blood of his servants."

And again they shouted: 3

"Hallelujah!
The smoke from her goes
up for ever and ever."

The twenty-four elders 4
and the four living creatures
fell down and worshiped
God, who was seated on the
throne. And they cried:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

Then a voice came from 5
the throne, saying:

"Praise our God,
all you his servants,
you who fear him,
both small and great!"

24. Punished because the blood. Babylon is "stained with the blood" of prophets and God's people. This requires God's vengeance! Also, this is another reason to think of Babylon as past, present, and future, rather than just a city or power at the "end time."

Heaven celebrates God's victory over the prostitute, Babylon!

1-4. Like the loud voice of a great crowd. The angels praise God for what he has done! They declare that in judging Babylon, God has completed the saving of his people. All opposition has been crushed forever! **The twenty-four elders.** These symbolize all God's people (see note on Rev. 4:3-6), and they join in praising God for his judgment of the prostitute. The four living creatures join in also! (See note on Rev. 18:20.)

The Wedding Feast of the Lamb.

5. The sound of a voice, saying. A solo voice, perhaps one of the angels. All - angel or man - are called upon to Praise our God!

fear him!" "Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a great crowd, like the roar of a mighty waterfall, like loud peals of thunder. I heard them say, "Praise God! For the Lord, our Almighty God, is King! "Let us rejoice and be glad; let us praise his greatness! For the time has come for the wedding of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself for it. "She has been given clean shining linen to dress herself with." (The linen is the righteous deeds of God's people.)

"Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Happy are those who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And the angel added, "These are the true words of God."

"I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do it! I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brothers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!"

For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets.

The Rider on the White Horse

"Then I saw heaven open, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True; it is with justice that he judges and fights his

6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!
For our Lord God
Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

8 Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear."

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God."

10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The Rider on the White Horse

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges

6. **Then I heard.** He uses different symbols to describe the *voice of praise* directed to God!

7-8. **For the time has come!** Here is the reason for rejoicing! The time has come for the Wedding of Christ and his church! This Wedding Feast will last through all Eternity! [Compare *Isa. 51:1-3; 54:1-5; 62:5; Jer. 2:32; Hosea 2:1; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:32; Rev. 21:9.*]

9-10. **Write this: Happy are those.** One of the beatitudes of Revelation. See also *Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14.* **Worship God.** John is ready to worship the speaker, but he is told to worship God! No one else is to be worshiped.

The judgment of the beast and the false prophet.

11. **There was a white horse.** The Rider is Christ at his Second Coming. [The white horse and Rider of the first seal are Christ conquering through his church in this world (*see Rev. 6:2.*)]

battles. ¹²His eyes were like a flame of fire, and he wore many crowns on his head. He had a name written on him, but no one except himself knows what it is. ¹³The robe he wore was covered with blood. The name by which he is called is "The Word of God." ¹⁴The armies of heaven followed him, riding on white horses and dressed in clean white linen. ¹⁵A sharp sword came out of his mouth, with which he will defeat the nations. He will rule over them with a rod of iron, and he will squeeze out the wine in the winepress of the furious wrath of the Almighty God. ¹⁶On his robe and on his leg was written the name: "King of kings and Lord of lords."

¹⁷Then I saw an angel standing in the sun. He shouted in a loud voice to all the birds flying in mid-air, "Come, and gather together for God's great feast! ¹⁸Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and soldiers, the flesh of horses and their riders, the flesh of all men, slave and free, great and small!"

¹⁹Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to fight against the one who rides the horse, and against his army. ²⁰The beast was taken prisoner, together with the false prophet who had performed miracles in his presence. (It was by those miracles

and makes war. His eyes are 12 like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one but he himself knows. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 13 The armies of heaven were 14 following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a 15 sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe 16 and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel stand- 17 ing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."

Then I saw the beast and 19 the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was cap- 20 tured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his

12-16. A symbolic picture (like "modern art") is painted of Christ. **Fire:** fierce destruction. **Crowns:** power and honor. **Name:** authority. **Robe . . . covered with blood:** slaughter, vengeance. **The Word of God:** his identity (*John 1:1*). **Sword:** slaughter - the power to defeat. **White horses:** victory. **White linen:** purity, being "not guilty." **King of Kings and Lord of Lords:** he is the highest of all (*Phil. 2:9*)!

17-18. **Come.** So certain is the victory of Christ, that an angel already calls the birds to come feast on the slaughtered kings and armies!

19. **Gathered to fight against.** This is "Armageddon." We meet this battle four times in Revelation (see also *Rev. 11:7-13; 16:12-16; 20:7-10*). Note that the armies of heaven do not wear armor or carry weapons (*verse 14*). No battle is fought. When the forces of evil are all prepared to destroy the forces of heaven (the church), "fire came down from heaven and destroyed them" (*Rev. 20:9*). See note on *Rev. 16:12*.

20-21. **The beast was taken prisoner.** See what happens to the beast and the false prophet and those who follow them.

that he had deceived those who had the mark of the beast, and those who had worshiped the image of the beast.) The beast and the false prophet were both thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹Their armies were killed by the sword that comes out of the mouth of the one who rides the horse; and all the birds ate all they could of their flesh.

The Thousand Years

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the abyss and a heavy chain. ²He seized the dragon, that old serpent—that is, the Devil, or Satan—and tied him up for a thousand years. ³The angel threw him into the abyss, locked it and sealed it, so that he could not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years were over. After that he must be set loose for a little while.

⁴Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them; they were given the power to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been executed because they had proclaimed the truth that Jesus revealed and the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image, nor had they received the mark of the beast on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and ruled

behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh. 21

The Thousand Years

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. 2

³ I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or 4

Christ and His Church Victors! chapters 20-22. (Rom. 8:37)

This is the seventh parallel section, and we again return to the First Coming of Christ.

1-3. **And tied him up for a thousand years.** Christ broke the power of Satan by dying on the cross (Luke 9:31). In the vision, we see Satan tied up with a heavy chain, thrown into the abyss, which is then locked and sealed. His power and influence over the nations is checked. The nations cannot conquer the church! The church conquers (makes them Christ's disciples) the nations. Compare Rev. 11:12-14; 12:5-12. Satan is bound for a thousand years - the entire Gospel Age. Compare Rev. 11:2-6; 12:14. Satan is bound by Christ and his sacrifice. Compare Matt. 12:29; Luke 4:1-13; 10:17-18; John 12:20-32; Col. 2:15; Rev. 12:5-11. "So that he could not deceive the nations any more." Satan is not permitted to destroy the church! **He must be set loose for a little while.** To deceive the nations and persecute the church. Satan is bound, but still permitted to use his evil influence. Again and again we see the events of Revelation repeat themselves. The church grows, becomes powerful, and Satan once again brings persecution against it. (See verses 7-10)

4-6. **Then I saw thrones.** Note that the Second Coming of Christ does not take place until verse 11. In

as kings with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over.) This is the first raising of the dead. ⁶Happy and greatly blessed are those who are included in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over them; they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they will rule with him for a thousand years.

his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

5

6

The Defeat of Satan

⁷After the thousand years are over, Satan will be set loose from his prison, ⁸and he will go out to deceive the nations scattered over all the world, that is, Gog and Magog. Satan will bring them all together for battle, as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. ⁹They spread out over the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people and the city that he loves. But fire came down

Satan's Doom

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and

7

8

9

the vision, John sees the *souls* (not bodies) of those who have killed (executed) for their work of proclaiming the Good News (Truth). A **thousand years**. Symbolic of a long indefinite period of time (compare 2 Pet. 3:8). Here it stands for the Gospel Age - that period of time from the Cross to the Second Coming. **They came to life**. This passage speaks only of *souls* of those who were *killed* because of their proclaiming the Good News of Christ. No mention here of a *bodily* resurrection. Where do these souls rule as kings with Christ? In heaven! [Paradise, see note at end of Luke 16:31.] They "sit by him on his throne" (Rev. 3:21); they "stand with him on Mount Zion" (Rev. 14:1); they "stand facing the throne, and sing a new song" (Rev. 14:3; 15:3). **Happy and greatly blessed!** See note on Rev. 14:13. **This first raising of the dead**. Note that the "second death" has no power over these. It must refer, then, to those who are completely removed from this world scene. Since it is a *resurrection* of the *soul*, it speaks of the transfer of the *spirit* (soul) from this sinful earth [which is under the curse, Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:20-21] to heaven (in the sense of paradise, see notes on Luke 16:19-31). The second raising of the dead will come when Christ returns (verse 11) and all the dead will be raised *both body and spirit* (soul)! See notes on verses 12-13. **They will rule with him for a thousand years**. Not only shall these souls rule with Christ, they will also worship God in Christ as priests all during the thousand years (gospel age). See Rev. 1:6; 4:10; 5:10; 7:15; 14:4.

7-10. **Satan will be set loose**. Any interpretation of this must take into account the fact that there will be Christians alive and waiting when Jesus returns (1 Thess. 4:17); and that the "church" does not terminate, but continues on into Eternity (Rev. 19:7-9). These verses present Armageddon - an event which takes place again and again during the entire gospel age. But here they seem to represent one final all-out effort of Satan, just before the Second Coming. But notice the sequence of events! Satan is

from heaven and destroyed them. ¹⁰Then the Devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown; and they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever.

The Final Judgment

¹¹Then I saw a large white throne and the one who sits on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and were seen no more. ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, the book of the living. The dead were judged according to what they had done, as was written in the books. ¹³Then the sea gave up its dead. Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴Then death and the world of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire. (This lake of fire is the second death.) ¹⁵Whoever did not have his name written in the book of the living was thrown into the lake of fire.

devoured them. And the 10
devil, who deceived them,
was thrown into the lake of
burning sulfur, where the
beast and the false prophet
had been thrown. They will
be tormented day and night
for ever and ever.

The Dead Are Judged

Then I saw a great white 11
throne and him who was
seated on it. Earth and sky
fled from his presence, and
there was no place for them.
And I saw the dead, great 12
and small, standing before
the throne, and books were
opened. Another book was
opened, which is the book of
life. The dead were judged
according to what they had
done as recorded in the
books. The sea gave up the 13
dead that were in it, and
death and Hades gave up
the dead that were in them,
and each person was judged
according to what he had
done. Then death and Hades 14
were thrown into the lake of
fire. The lake of fire is the
second death. If anyone's 15
name was not found written
in the book of life, he was
thrown into the lake of fire.

set loose. He goes out to deceive the nations. He brings them against the camp of God's people. Fire comes down from heaven and destroys them! The Devil is thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur! No BATTLE IS FOUGHT! (Compare *Rev. 11:7-13; 16:12-16; 19:19-21*.) We see Jesus and his mighty angels, with a flaming fire, coming to punish all who do not believe (*2 Thess. 1:7-10*). [Some believe the events of *Matt. 24* will be seen again, just before Jesus comes. If so, this must be balanced with the fact that Jesus will come "like a thief" when everything seems quiet and safe (*1 Thess. 5:1-4*).]

11. **Then I saw a large white throne.** This is the Second Coming of Christ! We shall all stand before Christ (*2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31; Matt. 25:31; Rev. 14:14*).

12-13. **And I saw the dead.** This is the raising of all the dead, both soul (spirit) and body. See *John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 1:7*. The apostles stressed the resurrection of the complete man (see *1 John 3:2; Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:35-57*). Paul continually preached about Jesus and the resurrection (*Acts 17:18*). *In the vision*, John sees the sea give up its dead, and Death and the world of the dead [Hades] give up the dead they hold. Every one of the dead are raised to live again: some in Eternity with God; some in the lake of fire with Satan.

14-15. **Were thrown into the lake of fire.** We see the doom of the unbeliever! The unbeliever and the unrighteous share the doom of the Devil, in a place never intended for them. [Book of the living: ancient cities kept the names of their legal citizens in a book. The names of the dead were erased from the book, also the names of criminals.]

The New Heaven and the New Earth

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. ²And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. ³I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne, "Now God's home is with men! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief, crying, or pain. The old things have disappeared."

⁵Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." ⁶And he said, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give a free drink of water from the spring of the water of

The New Jerusalem

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the

The redeemed universe in Eternity as symbolically pictured in the messianic community of the redeemed in the present!

1. **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.** New - in the sense of being radically changed. [*KAINOS*, not *NEOS*, "entirely new, unused"] Creation is to be *set free from its slavery to decay* (*Rom. 8:21*). Our present universe is to be destroyed (*2 Pet. 3:10*). But God has promised new heavens and a new earth (*2 Pet. 3:13; Acts 3:21*).

2. **The new Jerusalem.** Not the old material city. This is the church of Christ (*Matt. 16:18*), "like a bride dressed to meet her husband."

3. **Now God's home is with men.** This is true now (*Eph. 2:22*). God lives in his church through the Holy Spirit. But the Church Triumphant will receive a greater fulfillment in Eternity! (Compare *Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Ezek. 11:20; Zech. 13:9; Matt. 13:17; 2 Cor. 6:16*.)

4. **He will wipe away all tears.** This is fulfilled now in the "peace which is beyond human understanding" which God gives the Christian (*Phil. 4:5-7*). Again, the Church Triumphant will receive a greater fulfillment in Eternity (see notes on *Rev. 7:13-17*).

5-7. **And now I make all things new.** This is God's promise! We become *new* when we are joined to Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*). Those who *win the victory* will share in the *new heaven and new earth* when God makes all things new! (See *Rev. 19:9; 22:6; Psalm 36:8; Rev. 7:14-17*.)

life. ⁷Whoever wins the victory will receive this from me: I will be his God, and he will be my son. ⁸But the cowards, the traitors, and the perverts, the murderers and the immoral, those who practice magic and those who worship idols, and all liars—the place for them is the lake burning with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

The New Jerusalem

⁹One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came to me and said, “Come, and I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰The Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me to the top of a very high mountain. He showed me Jerusalem, the Holy City, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹shining with the glory of God. The city shone like a precious stone, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and with twelve angels in charge of the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of the people of Israel. ¹³There were three gates on each side: three on the east, three on the south, three on the north, and three on the west. ¹⁴The city’s wall was built on twelve stones, on which were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵The angel who spoke to me had a gold measuring stick, to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.

water of life. He who over- 7
comes will inherit all this, 8
and I will be his God and he 9
will be my son. But the cow- 10
ardly, the unbelieving, the 11
vile, the murderers, the sex- 12
ually immoral, those who 13
practice magic arts, the idol- 14
ators and all liars—their 15
place will be in the fiery lake 16
of burning sulfur. This is the 17
second death.”

One of the seven angels 9
who had the seven bowls full 10
of the seven last plagues 11
came and said to me, 12
“Come, I will show you the 13
bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 14
And he carried me away in 15
the Spirit to a mountain 16
great and high, and showed 17
me the Holy City, Jerusalem, 18
coming down out of heaven 19
from God. It shone with the 20
glory of God, and its brilli- 21
ance was like that of a very 22
precious jewel, like a jasper, 23
clear as crystal. It had a 24
great, high wall with twelve 25
gates, and with twelve angels 26
at the gates. On the gates 27
were written the names of the 28
twelve tribes of Israel. There 29
were three gates on the east, 30
three on the north, three on 31
the south and three on the 32
west. The wall of the city had 33
twelve foundations, and on 34
them were the names of the 35
twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with 15
me had a measuring rod of 16
gold to measure the city, its 17

8. **But the cowards.** Notice that the COWARDS head the list of those who are to be punished for their sin. Read what Jesus said in *Matt. 10:32-39*. Those who have done these things must meet God’s Wrath! See *Rev. 20:15*.

9-23. **Come, and I will show you the Bride.** Under the symbolism of [spiritual] Jerusalem, *the New Jerusalem*, the wife of the Lamb [the church of Christ] is described. This Holy City is the Church Triumphant [the glorified church of the future]. Even the Church Militant [the church here on earth] gleams with this *glory*, SINCE THERE IS BUT ONE CHURCH! To show the VALUE of Christ’s Bride [his church], the Holy City is constructed out of everything this world thinks so valuable. Gold, every kind of precious jewel and stone - these things are used like common brick and mortar to build this city! The city is a perfect cube, 1,500 miles on a side, symbolic of the *perfection* of Christ’s church [the Kingdom of God]. The Most Holy Place in the Jewish Temple was also a perfect cube. The city shines with the glory of God, and has no need for a “sun” or a “moon” (*verse 23*). The great, high wall is symbolic of protection and safety. God’s people will be free from worry and sorrow forever (*see Rev. 7:14-17*).

¹⁶The city was perfectly square, as long as it was wide. The angel measured the city with his measuring stick: it was 1,500 miles long and was as wide and as high as it was long. ¹⁷The angel also measured the wall, and it was 216 feet high, according to the standard unit of measure, which he was using. ¹⁸The wall was made of jasper, and the city itself was made of pure gold, as clear as glass. ¹⁹The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation stone was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh yellow quartz, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chalcedony, the eleventh turquoise, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls; each gate was made from a single pearl. The street of the city was of pure gold, transparent as glass.

²²I did not see a temple in the city, because its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. ²³The city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God shines on it, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴The peoples of the world will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their wealth into it. ²⁵The gates of the city will stand open all day; they will never be closed, because there will be no night there. ²⁶The greatness and the wealth of the nations will be brought into the city. ²⁷But nothing that is impure will enter the city, nor anyone who does shameful things or tells lies. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of the living will enter the city.

gates and its wall. The city ¹⁶ was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He ¹⁷ measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. The wall ¹⁸ was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the ¹⁹ city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve ²¹ gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

I did not see a temple in ²² the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does ²³ not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ²⁵ ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22. I did not see a temple in the city. God and the Lamb are its temple, and their glory fills the whole city! Compare *Jer. 3:16-17; 31:33-34; Heb. 8:7-13*. In other words, the *redeemed* who live in this city have no need to go to a specific location to meet God. God fills all and is with them in contact so indescribable that we have no words to express it! [It would be useless to dissect the "picture-symbol" given in *verse 12-21* to make each jewel have a specific meaning. It intends to *symbolically describe* those things which human language cannot express! The *eternal reward* for God's people is far beyond human imagination! And the church itself is "*what no man ever thought could happen*" (*1 Cor. 2:9*).]

22 The angel also showed me the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal, which comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ²and flows down the middle of the city's street. On each side of the river was the tree of life, which bears fruit twelve times a year, once every month; and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing that is under God's curse will be found in the city.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵There shall be no more night, and they will not need lamps or sunlight, because the Lord God will be their light, and they will rule as kings forever and ever.

The Coming of Jesus

⁶Then the angel said to me, "These words are true and can be trusted. And the Lord God, who gives his Spirit to the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants what must happen very soon."

⁷"Listen!" says Jesus. "I am coming soon! Happy are those who obey the prophetic words in this book!"

The River of Life

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The angel said to me, ⁶"These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

Jesus Is Coming

⁷"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

COMPLETE VICTORY!!! *Romans 8:37-39.*

1. **The river of the water of life.** Water means many things in the Bible. It is symbolic of: separation (see *1 Pet. 3:20-21*); making pure (see *Heb. 9:19*); life (see *Psalms 107:35-37*); the Holy Spirit (see *John 7:37-39*); salvation (see *Eph. 5:26; Col. 2:11-12*). Note that here it comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb. God accepts as righteous all who "reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make themselves part of it" (compare notes on *Acts 2:38*). The emphasis in these verses is perfect fellowship with God!

2-3. **Was the tree of life.** No more curse! The "Paradise" which was lost through Adam, has been regained by those who belong to Christ! **The throne of God and of the Lamb.** God is LOVE to all in his city! [God is wrath to all who are outside his city!]

5. **There shall be no more night.** The Christians rule on earth (*Rev. 5:10*); in heaven with Christ a thousand years (*Rev. 20:40*); and in the New Heaven and New Earth as kings forever and ever!

6. **Then the angel said to me.** The angel affirms that these words are true and can be trusted. This book [the whole Bible, as well] is of divine origin! Compare *Heb. 1:1-2; Rev. 1:1-3; 19:9; 21:5*.

7. **Happy are those who obey.** One of the "beatitudes" of Revelation. See note on *Rev. 14:13*.

⁸I, John, have heard and seen all these things. And when I finished hearing and seeing them, I fell down at the feet of the angel who had shown me these things to worship him. ⁹But he said to me, "Don't do it! I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brothers the prophets, and of all those who obey the words in this book. Worship God!" ¹⁰And he said to me, "Do not keep the prophetic words of this book a secret, because the time is near when all this will happen. ¹¹Whoever is evil must go on doing evil, and whoever is filthy must go on being filthy; whoever is good must go on doing good, and whoever is holy must go on being holy."

¹²"Listen!" says Jesus. "I am coming soon! I will bring my rewards with me to give to each one according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

¹⁴Happy are those who wash their robes clean, and so have the right to eat the fruit from the tree of life, and to go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵But outside the city are perverts and those who practice magic, the immoral and the murderers, those who worship idols, and those who are liars, both in words and deeds.

I, John, am the one who 8
heard and saw these things.
And when I had heard and
seen them, I fell down to
worship at the feet of the
angel who had been showing
them to me. But he said to 9
me, "Do not do it! I am a fel-
low servant with you and
with your brothers the
prophets and of all who keep
the words of this book. Wor-
ship God!"

Then he told me, "Do not 10
seal up the words of the
prophecy of this book, be-
cause the time is near. Let 11
him who does wrong contin-
ue to do wrong; let him who
is vile continue to be vile; let
him who does right continue
to do right; and let him who
is holy continue to be holy."

"Behold, I am coming 12
soon! My reward is with me,
and I will give to everyone
according to what he has
done. I am the Alpha and 13
the Omega, the First and the
Last, the Beginning and the
End.

"Blessed are those who 14
wash their robes, that they
may have the right to the
tree of life and may go
through the gates into the
city. Outside are the dogs, 15
those who practice magic
arts, the sexually immoral,
the murderers, the idolaters
and everyone who loves and
practices falsehood.

8-9. **But he said to me.** Neither angels nor men are to be worshiped! Worship God!!!

10. **Do not keep the prophetic words of this book a secret.** See note on *Rev. 1:19*. This book lifts the curtain of both the present and the future. Revelation is not meant to be a sealed book! It is to be read and understood. It was to strengthen the suffering Christians in the first century, and in all the ages to come, up to the time when Jesus returns.

11-12. **Whoever is evil must go on doing evil.** A time is coming when men and women will not be able to turn back from the life they have chosen! Jesus will reward everyone on the basis of their choice in life.

13-14. **Happy are those who wash their robes clean.** A "beatitude." See notes on *verses 1 and 7*. Those who *belong to Christ* HAVE THE RIGHT to eat the fruit and to go into the city.

15. **But outside the city.** No impurity is allowed in heaven. Those who have followed Satan in this life, have no part in the Holy City! [Note that those allowed in have been accepted as perfect through the imputed righteousness of Christ. See note on *verse 1*.]

¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to announce these things to you in the churches. I am the descendant from the family of David; I am the bright morning star."

¹⁷The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"

Everyone who hears this must also say, "Come!"

Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the water of life as a gift, whoever wants it.

Conclusion

¹⁸I, John, solemnly warn everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to his punishment the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes away anything from the prophetic words of this book, God will take away from him his share of the fruit of the tree of life, and his share of the Holy City, which are described in this book.

²⁰He who gives his testimony to all this, says, "Certainly so! I am coming soon!"

So be it, Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

"I, Jesus, have sent my 16 angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

The Spirit and the bride ¹⁷ say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" ¹⁸Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

I warn everyone who hears ¹⁸ the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if ¹⁹ anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

He who testifies to these ²⁰ things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord 21 Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

17. **The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!** The call is to everyone in the entire human race (*John 6:44-45*). **Accept the water of life as a gift.** Jesus has already paid for it with his *act in history*. ["Christianity is not the preacher standing on Mount Sinai, thundering "Do this, or you will be damned;" but the Lord of Glory, from His Cross and from His Throne, saying to everyone: "Here is the *price* of heaven, the *key* to the Holy City, the infinite riches, instant pardon - if you will reach out and take it."]

18-19. **I, John, solemnly warn everyone.** This is a warning against tampering with the Word. God is the author [through John]. Do not *add* or *take away*. Do not make fun of this book. Do not say it isn't worth studying. It speaks to the entire Gospel Age, from Christ's First Coming until he returns!

20-21. **I am coming soon!** Jesus answers the eager prayer of his church [the messianic community]. The church of the first century ended each prayer with the words: "*Come, Lord Jesus!*" **May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.** John is jubilant as he gives this benediction! He has seen *today* and *tomorrow* in the vision, but most important, he has seen the *day after tomorrow!* He has seen the vision of God's people in Eternity!!! So should we all see this! **THE VISION OF THE AGES!!!**

WORD LIST

A

- Aaron** The brother of Moses, who was chosen by God to be the chief priest in Israel (*Exodus 28:1 - 30:10*).
- Abyss** A very deep hole in the earth where, according to ancient Jewish teaching, the evil spirits are imprisoned until their final punishment.
- Achaia** A Roman province covering what is now the southern half of Greece (the northern half of modern Greece was known as Macedonia). In this translation "Greece" is used for Achaia and also for *Hellas* (*Acts 20:2*), which was the native Greek name corresponding to the Roman name Achaia. The capital city of the province was Corinth; other cities in Achaia mentioned in the New Testament are Cenchræ and Athens.
- Agate** A semiprecious stone of varying colors.
- Agrippa** Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great, was king of Chalcis, a small country north of Palestine, and ruler of nearby territories. Paul made his defense before him and his sister Bernice (*Acts 25:13 - 26:32*).
- Alabaster** A soft stone, of light creamy color, from which vases and jars were made.
- Aloes** A sweet-smelling substance, derived from a plant, which the Jews spread on the cloths they wrapped around a body to be buried.
- Alpha** The first letter of the Greek alphabet. The expression "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (*Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13*) means "I am the first and the last."
- Altar** The place where sacrifices were offered to God.
- Amen** A Hebrew word which means "it is so" or "may it be so." It can also be translated "certainly," "truly," or "surely." In *Revelation 3:14* it is used as a title for Christ.
- Amethyst** A semiprecious stone, usually purple or violet in color.
- Ancestor** Someone who lived in the past, from whom a person is descended.
- Anoint** To pour or rub oil on someone in order to honor him, or select him for some special work. The word is also used in a figurative sense. "The Anointed One" is the title of the one whom God chose and appointed to be Savior and Lord. Oil was also used by the Jews on a sick person to make him well; it was also used on a dead body to prepare it for burial.
- Apostle** One of the group of twelve men whom Jesus chose to be his followers and helpers. The word means "messenger," and is also used in the New Testament of Paul and of other Christian workers.
- Areopagus** A hill in Athens where the city council met. For this reason the council itself was called Areopagus, even after it no longer met on the hill.
- Aretas** King of the country of Nabatea, which was to the south and east of Palestine.
- Ark** (1) The vessel built by Noah in which he, his family, and the animals survived the Flood (*Genesis 6:9 - 8:19*). (2) The wooden chest, covered with gold, in which were kept the two stone tablets on which were written the ten commandments. Other sacred objects of the Jews were also kept in the ark, which was placed in the tabernacle (*Exodus 25:10-22; Hebrews 9:4-5*).
- Armageddon** The place mentioned in *Revelation 16:16*; it is not certain whether the name refers to an actual place ("the hill of Megiddo"), or is used as a symbol.
- Artemis** The Greek name of an ancient goddess of fertility, worshiped especially in Asia Minor.
- Asia** A Roman province in the western part of what was later known as Asia Minor, and is today part of the country of Turkey. Besides the seven cities of Asia listed in the book of *Revelation* (*1:4, 11; 2:1 - 3:22*), other cities in the province mentioned in the New Testament are Colossæ, Hierapolis, and Miletus. The capital of the province was Ephesus.

Atonement, Day of The most important of the Jewish holy days, when the High Priest would offer sacrifice for the sins of the people of Israel (*Leviticus 16:29-34*). It was held on the 10th day of the month Tishri (around October 1).

Augustus One of the titles of Gaius Octavius, who was Roman Emperor from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14 (*Luke 2:1*).

B

Baal The name of the god worshiped by the ancient people of Canaan.

Babylon The capital city of the ancient land of Babylonia, east of Palestine, on the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. In *1 Peter 5:13* and *Revelation* the name Babylon probably refers to the city of Rome.

Balaam A native of Pethor, near the Euphrates river, who was asked by Balak, king of Moab, to curse the people of Israel. Instead, Balaam obeyed God's command and blessed Israel (*Numbers 22:1-24:25; Deuteronomy 23:3-6; Joshua 13:22*).

Balak The king of Moab, a country on the southeast side of the Dead Sea. He led the people of Israel to worship idols (*Numbers 22:1-24:25; Revelation 2:14*).

Bastard A person born of parents who are not legally married.

Beelzebub The name given to the Devil as the chief of the evil spirits.

Bernice Sister of King Agrippa II (*Acts 25:13-26:32*).

Beryl A semiprecious stone, usually green or bluish green in color.

Blasphemy An evil thing said against God.

Breastplate Part of a soldier's armor, made of leather or metal, which covered the breast, and sometimes the back, to protect him from the enemy's attack.

Brier A small plant with thorns on its stems and branches.

C

Caesar The title given to the Roman Emperor.

Carnelian A semiprecious stone, usually red in color.

Census The registration of citizens and their property, to determine how much tax they had to pay.

Chalcedony A semiprecious stone, usually milky or gray in color.

Christ Originally a title, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "Messiah." It means "the anointed one." Jesus is called the Christ because he is the one whom God chose and sent as Savior and Lord.

Cinnamon The sweet-smelling inner bark of a certain tree, used as a spice on food.

Circumcise To cut off the foreskin of a Jewish baby boy as a sign of God's covenant with the people of Israel (*Genesis 17:9-14*).

Claudius Roman Emperor A.D. 41-54 (*Acts 11:28; 18:2*).

Convert A person who is converted, or turned, from one belief or faith to another.

Council The supreme religious court of the Jews, composed of seventy leaders of the Jewish people and presided over by the High Priest.

Covenant The agreement that God made with Abraham (*Genesis 17:1-8*), and later with the people of Israel (*Deuteronomy 29:10-15*).

Cumin A small garden plant whose seeds are ground up and used for seasoning foods.

D

Dalmatia The southern half of the province of Illyricum.

Dedication, Feast of The Jewish feast, lasting eight days, which celebrated the restoration and rededication of the altar in the Temple by the Jewish patriot Judas Maccabeus, in 165 B.C. The feast began on the 25th day of the month Chislew (around December 10).

Defile To make dirty, impure. Certain foods and practices were prohibited by the Jewish Law because they were thought to make a person spiritually or ceremonially unclean. In this condition such a person could not take part in the public worship until he had performed certain rituals which would remove the defilement.

Demon An evil spirit with the power to harm people, that was regarded as a messenger and servant of the Devil.

Descendant A person who is related by family line to someone who lived a long time before him.

Dill A small garden plant whose seeds are ground up and used for seasoning foods.

Disciple A person who follows and learns from someone else. The word is used in the New Testament of the followers of John the Baptist and Paul; it is especially used of the followers of Jesus, particularly of the twelve apostles.

Dough Flour mixed with water to be baked into bread.

Dragon An imaginary beast, thought to be like a huge lizard. It is also called a serpent, and appears in the Bible as a figure of the Devil (*Revelation 12:3 - 13:4; 20:2-3*).

Drusilla Sister of King Agrippa II and wife of the Roman governor Felix (*Acts 24:24*).

E

Elders Three different groups in the New Testament are called elders: (1) in the Gospels, the elders are respected Jewish religious leaders, some of whom were members of the supreme Council; (2) in *Acts 11 - 21* and the Epistles, the elders are Christian church officers who had general responsibility for the work of the church (the author of 2 and 3 John identifies himself as "the Elder"); (3) in *Revelation*, the 24 elders are part of God's court in heaven, perhaps as representatives of God's people.

Elijah The Old Testament prophet who was expected to appear to announce the coming of the Messiah (*Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:9-13*).

Emerald A very valuable stone, green in color.

Epicureans Those who followed the teaching of Epicurus (died 270 B.C.), who taught that happiness is the highest good in life.

Epileptic A person who suffers from a nervous disease which causes convulsions and fainting.

Eunuch A man who has been made physically incapable of having normal sexual relations.

F

Fast To go without food for a while as a religious duty.

Felix The Roman governor of Judea A.D. 52-60, before whom Paul defended himself (*Acts 23:24 - 24:27*).

Festus The Roman governor of Judea A.D. 60-62, before whom Paul defended himself and made his appeal to the Roman Emperor (*Acts 25:1 - 26:32*).

- Foal** The young of an animal of the horse family.
Frankincense A valuable incense, suitable for a gift.

G

- Gabriel** One of God's chief angels, who was sent to Zechariah, father of John the Baptist (*Luke 1:11-20*), and to Mary, mother of Jesus (*Luke 1:26-38*).
Galatia A Roman province in the eastern part of what was later known as Asia Minor, and is today part of the country of Turkey. The cities of Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe were in the province of Galatia.
Gall A very bitter liquid made from a certain plant.
Gallo The Roman governor of Greece A.D. 51-52 (*Acts 18:12-17*).
Gamallel One of the greatest Jewish teachers, a member of the supreme Council of the Jews (*Acts 5:34-40*), who had been Paul's teacher (*Acts 22:3*).
Generation The average period, about 30 years in length, from the time a man becomes an adult to the time his son becomes an adult.
Genesaret Another name for Lake Galilee (*Luke 5:1*).
Gentile A person who is not a Jew.
Gomorrhah A city near the Dead Sea which God destroyed by fire because of the great wickedness of its people (*Genesis 19:24-28*).
Greece See Achaia.

H

- Hades** The Greek name, in the New Testament, for the world of the dead; the same as Sheol in the Old Testament.
Hermes The name of a Greek God, who served as messenger of the gods.
Herod (1) Herod the Great (*Matthew 2:1-22; Luke 1:5*) was king of all the country of the Jews 37-4 B.C. He was responsible for the killing of the baby boys in Bethlehem soon after Jesus was born. (2) Herod (whose full name was Herod Antipas) was ruler of Galilee 4 B.C. - A.D. 39 (*Matthew 14:1-10; Mark 6:14-27; Luke 3:1, 19-20; 9:7-9; 13:31; 23:6-12; Acts 4:27; 13:1*). He was son of Herod the Great, and although called a king (*Mark 6:14*), he was not a king as his father had been. He was responsible for the death of John the Baptist. (3) Herod (whose full name was Herod Agrippa I) was ruler of all the land of the Jews, with the title of king, A.D. 41-44 (*Acts 12:1-23*). He was grandson of Herod the Great. He put the apostle James to death and arrested Peter.
Herodias The wife of Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee. Before marrying Herod she had been the wife of his half-brother Philip (*Matthew 14:3-12; Mark 6:17-28; Luke 3:19*).
Herod's party A political party composed of Jews who favored one of the descendants of Herod the Great to rule over them instead of the Roman governor.
High Priest The Priest who occupied the highest office in the Jewish priestly system and was president of the supreme Council of the Jews. Once a year (on the Day of Atonement) he would enter the holiest part of the Temple and offer sacrifice for himself and for the sins of the people of Israel.
Homosexual A man who has sexual relations with another man.
Hyssop A small bushy plant, used in ceremonies of sprinkling.

I

Illyricum A province on the coast of the Adriatic Sea, north of the province of Macedonia, in what is now Yugoslavia.

Incense Material which is burned in order to produce a pleasant smell.

Inn A house where travelers can buy food and lodging.

J

Jasper A semiprecious stone of varying colors. The jasper mentioned in the Bible was probably green.

Jesse The father of King David, one of the ancestors of Jesus (*Matthew 1:5-6; Acts 13:22; Romans 15:12*).

K

Kingdom of God, Kingdom of heaven The titles used to describe God's ruling over the world as king. There is no difference between the two titles, both of which refer primarily to God's possession and exercise of his power, not to a place or a time in history. This Kingdom is spoken of as being already present and also as coming in the future.

L

Lady The recipient of *2John* (*verses 1, 5*), probably a church, not an individual. Under this interpretation, her "children" (*verses 1, 4*) are the church members, and her "Sister" (*verse 13*) is also a church to which the writer belongs.

Law The name the Jews applied to the first five books of the Old Testament, also called the books of Moses. Sometimes the name is also used in a more general sense of the whole Old Testament.

Leper Someone suffering from a disease called leprosy. It is probable that in the Bible the word translated "leprosy" had a wider range of meaning than it does now, and was used as the name of several other skin diseases as well.

Levite A member of the priestly tribe of Levi, who had the duty of helping in the services in the Temple (*Numbers 3:1-13*).

Locust A grasshopper, a winged insect extremely harmful to plants; locusts fly in huge swarms and eat crops and other plants.

Lot The nephew of Abraham who escaped with his daughters from the city of Sodom when it was destroyed by God. Lot's wife, however, did not escape (*Genesis 19:12-29; Luke 17:28-32; 2 Peter 2:6-8*).

M

Macedonia A Roman province covering what is now the northern half of Greece. Its capital city was Thessalonica. Other cities in the province mentioned in the New Testament are Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Berea.

- Magdalene** Mary Magdalene, a follower of Jesus, was one of those to whom Jesus appeared after he was raised from death (*Mark 15:40-47; Luke 8:2; John 20:1-18*). Her name indicates that she was born in Magdala, a town on the west side of Lake Galilee.
- Manna** The food of the Israelites during their travels in the wilderness. It was small, white, and flaky, and looked like small seeds (*Exodus 16:14-21; Numbers 11:7-9*).
- Messiah** The title (meaning "the anointed one") given to the promised Savior whose coming was promised by the Hebrew prophets; the same as "Christ."
- Michael** One of God's chief angels (*Jude 9; Revelation 12:7*).
- Mint** A small garden plant, whose leaves are used for seasoning foods.
- Moloch** One of the gods of the ancient people of Canaan.
- Mustard** A large plant which grows from a very small seed. The seeds may be ground into powder and used as spice on food.
- Myrrh** The hardened sap of a tree, with a pleasant smell, and suitable for a gift (*Matthew 2:11; Revelation 18:13*). It served also as a medicine (*Mark 15:23*), and was also used by the Jews in preparing bodies for burial (*John 19:39*).

N

- Nard** A plant from which an expensive perfume was made.
- Nazarene** Someone from the town of Nazareth. The name was used as a title for Jesus, and also as a name for the early Christians (*Acts 24:5*).
- Nicolaitans** A group referred to in *Revelation 2:6, 15* whose teachings and actions are condemned. They apparently practiced idolatry and immorality, but nothing definite is known as to when, where, and by whom the group was started.
- Nineveh** The ancient capital of Assyria, on the east side of the river Tigris, where the prophet Jonah preached (*Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 11:30, 32*).
- Noah** The Old Testament patriarch who built an ark in which he, his family, and the animals were saved from the flood that God sent on the earth (*Genesis 6:5 - 9:28*).

O

- Omega** The last letter of the Greek alphabet. The expression "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (*Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13*) means "I am the first and the last."
- Onyx** A semiprecious stone of varying colors.
- Outcasts** In the Gospels this name, which in many translations appears as "sinners," refers to those Jews who did not obey all the rules laid down by the religious leaders. The Pharisees were especially strict about foods that should not be eaten and about relationships with people who were not Jews. The leaders of the Jews despised these people and condemned Jesus for associating with them (*Mark 2:15-17; Luke 7:34; 15:1-2*).

P

- Parable** A story used by Jesus to teach spiritual lessons.
- Paradise** A name for heaven (*Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:3*).

- Paralytic** Someone who suffers from a disease that prevents him from moving part or all of his body.
- Parchment** The skin of an animal, usually a sheep or a goat, which was prepared to be written on.
- Passover, Feast of** The Jewish feast, on the 14th day of the month Nisan (around April 1), which celebrated the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from their captivity in Egypt. The angel of death killed the firstborn in the Egyptian homes but "passed over" the Hebrew homes (*Exodus 12:23-27*).
- Patriarchs** The famous ancestors of the Jewish race, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom God made his covenants.
- Pentecost, Day of** The Jewish feast of wheat harvest, on the 6th day of the month Sivan (around May 20). The name Pentecost (meaning "fiftieth") comes from the fact that the feast was held 50 days after Passover.
- Pervert** One who commits unnatural sexual acts.
- Pharaoh** The title of the kings of ancient Egypt. Two different kings of Egypt are mentioned in the New Testament: the one who ruled during the time of Joseph, the son of Jacob (*Acts 7:10-13; Genesis 40:1 - 50:26*), and the one who ruled during the time of Moses (*Acts 7:21; Romans 9:17; Hebrews 11:24; Exodus 1:8-14:31*).
- Pharisees** A Jewish religious party. They were strict in obeying the Law of Moses and other regulations which had been added to it through the centuries.
- Pilate** Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, A.D. 26-36 (*Mark 15:1-15; Luke 3:1; Acts 3:13; 1 Timothy 6:13*).
- Potter** A man who makes pots and other vessels out of clay.
- Preparation, Day of** The sixth day of the week, on which the Jews made the required preparations to observe the Sabbath day.
- Prophet** A man who proclaims God's message to men. (1) The term usually refers to the Old Testament prophets (*Matthew 5:12, 17; 13:17*), such as Isaiah (*Matthew 3:3*), Jeremiah (*Matthew 2:17*), Jonah (*Matthew 12:39*), Daniel (*Matthew 24:15*), and Joel (*Acts 2:16*). (2) The term also refers to prophets in the Church (*Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:28-29; Ephesians 4:11*). (3) The term is applied also to John the Baptist (*Matthew 11:9; 14:5; Luke 1:76*), and to Jesus (*Matthew 21:11, 46; Luke 7:16; 24:19; John 9:17*). (4) "The Prophet" promised by Moses was expected to appear and announce the coming of the Messiah (*Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; John 6:14; 7:40; Acts 3:22-23*).
- Prune** To cut the branches off a fruit tree in order to make it bear more and better fruit.

Q

- Quartz** A semiprecious stone of varying colors, usually white.

R

- Rabbi** A Hebrew word which means "my teacher."
- Rephan** The name of an ancient god that was worshiped as the ruler of the planet Saturn.
- Ritual** An established form for conducting a religious service.
- Rue** A small garden plant whose leaves are used for seasoning foods.

S

- Sabbath** The seventh day of the Jewish week, the holy day on which no work was permitted.

- Sadducees** A small Jewish religious party, composed largely of priests. They based their beliefs primarily on the first five books of the Old Testament, and so differed in several matters of belief and practice from the larger party of the Pharisees.
- Samaritan** A native of Samaria, the province between Judea and Galilee. There was much hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans, because of differences in politics, race, customs, and religion.
- Sanctuary** A building dedicated to the worship of God. Sometimes the word may refer to the central place of worship, and not to the whole building.
- Sapphire** A very valuable stone, usually blue in color.
- Saul** (1) The first king of Israel (*1 Samuel 13-31; Acts 13:21*); (2) the Hebrew name of the apostle Paul (*Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1-30; 11:25-30; 12:25; 13:1-9*).
- Scorpion** A small creature, which has eight legs and a long tail with a poisonous sting. It can inflict a very painful, and sometimes fatal, wound.
- Scriptures** In the New Testament the word refers to the collected body of Jewish sacred writings, known to us as the Old Testament. Various names are used: the Law (or the Law of Moses) and the prophets (*Matthew 5:17; 7:12; Luke 2:22; 24:44; Acts 13:15; 28:23*); the Holy Scriptures (*Romans 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:15*); the old covenant (*2 Corinthians 3:14*). The singular "scripture" refers to a single passage of the Old Testament.
- Serpent** A name given to the dragon, which appears in the Bible as a figure of the Devil (*Revelation 12:3-17; 20:2-3*).
- Sheepfold** An enclosure where sheep were kept, usually at night, to protect them from wild animals and thieves.
- Shepherd** A man, or boy, who takes care of sheep.
- Sickle** A tool consisting of a curved metal blade and a wooden handle, used for cutting wheat and other crops.
- Sodom** A city near the Dead Sea which God destroyed by fire because of the great wickedness of its people (*Genesis 19:24-28*).
- Solomon's Porch** A covered court on the east side of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Son of David** A title which the Jews used of the expected Messiah as the descendant and successor of King David.
- Son of Man** The title used by Jesus to refer to himself as the one chosen by God to be the Savior (*Mark 10:45*). As used by Jesus, this title emphasized both his present lowly condition (*Mark 8:31; Luke 9:58*) and his future glory (*Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38*).
- Spice** One of several pleasant-smelling vegetable products which were used by the Jews in preparing bodies for burial.
- Stoics** Those who followed the teachings of the philosopher Zeno (died 265 B.C.), who taught that happiness is to be found in being free from pleasure and pain.
- Sulfur** A yellow substance which burns with great heat and produces an unpleasant smell.
- Synagogue** The place where Jews met every Sabbath day for their public worship; it was also used as a social center and as a school for Jewish children during week days.

T

- Tabernacle** A large tent-like construction, described in detail in *Exodus 26*, where God had his dwelling among his people.
- Tabernacles, Feast of** The Jewish feast, lasting eight days, which in New Testament times celebrated the time when the ancient Hebrews lived in tents during their travels through the wilderness. In Old Testament times it was also known as the Feast of Ingathering (*Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:33-43*). The feast began on the 15th day of the month Tishri (around October 6).

Teachers of the Law Men who taught and interpreted the teachings of the Old Testament, especially the first five books.

Tenant A man who raises crops on land owned by someone else, and turns over a large part of the harvest to the owner to pay for the use of his land.

Ten Towns A group of ten Gentile towns, most of which were to the east and southeast of Lake Galilee.

Theophylus The one to whom the Gospel of *Luke* and the book of *Acts* (*Luke 1:1*; *Acts 1:1*) are dedicated. Nothing is known about him, and it is not certain that he is a real person; the name means "God's friend," and may designate the Christian readers of the books.

Tiberias Another name of Lake Galilee (*John 6:1*; *21:1*). The town of Tiberias (*John 6:23*) was on the west side of Lake Galilee.

Tiberius Roman Emperor A.D. 14-37. It was in the 15th year of his rule (about A.D. 29) that John the Baptist began his work (*Luke 3:1*).

Topaz A semiprecious stone, usually yellow in color.

Turquoise A semiprecious stone, blue or bluish green in color.

U

Unleavened Bread, Feast of The Jewish feast, lasting seven days after Passover, which also celebrated the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from Egypt. The name came from the practice of not using leaven (or yeast) in making bread during that week (*Exodus 12:14-20*). It was held from the 15th to the 22nd day of the month Nisan (around the first week of April).

V

Vow A strong declaration, or promise, usually made while calling upon God to punish the speaker if the statement is not true or the promise is not kept.

W

Winnowing shovel A tool like a shovel, or large fork, used to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Wreath Flowers or leaves arranged in a circle, to be placed on a person's head. In ancient times a wreath of leaves was the prize given to winners in athletic contests.

Y

Yeast A substance, also called leaven, which is added to flour of wheat or barley to make it rise before being baked into bread.

Yoke A heavy bar of wood which is fitted over the necks of two oxen in order for them to pull a plow or a cart. The word is used figuratively to describe the lessons that a teacher passes on to his pupils.

Z

Zeus The name of the supreme god of the Greeks.

Zion The name of a hill in the city of Jerusalem; the name is often used to mean Jerusalem itself.

