

# THE GOSPEL

According To

# PAUL

STUDIES IN PAUL'S SHORTER LETTERS TO CHURCHES

*Galatians*

*and*

*Ephesians*

WITH CLASS QUESTIONS FOR EACH LESSON

By:  
Reg Ginn



# THE GOSPEL

*According to*

PAUL

STUDIES IN PAUL'S SHORTER LETTERS TO CHURCHES

*Galatians*

“Christ and the Law”

WITH CLASS QUESTIONS FOR EACH LESSON

By:  
Reg Ginn



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

## Galatians:

### THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW

“...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

## Ephesians:

### THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22,23)

## Philippians:

### THE GOSPEL IN THE CHURCH

“...that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:10,11)

## Colossians:

### THE GOSPEL AND CHRIST

“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)

# **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL**

## **GALATIANS**

### **“Christ and the Law”**

**“...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)**

**“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1)**



MACEDONIA

Philippi Neapolis

Beroea Thessalonica

BLACK SEA

GALATIA

CAPPADOCIA

Troas Assos

ASIA

Antioch

CILICIA

ACHAIA

Athens

Ephesus Miletus

Lystra

Iconium

Tarsus

Corinth

Chios

Samos

Cos

Phrygia

Colosse

Derbe

Patara

Antioch

SYRIA

CRETE

Rhodes

CYPRUS

DAMASCUS

ARABIA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Ptolemais

Tyre

Caesarea

Jerusalem  
PALESTINE

## INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS

GALATIANS is a unique epistle. It was written by Paul to a *group of churches* rather than to:

- a. An individual person such as Timothy, Titus, or Philemon;
- b. An individual church such as Thessalonica, Rome, or Corinth;
- c. A group of Christians such as the Hebrews.

The letter was intended for circulation among the congregations designated as “the churches of Galatia.” The problems addressed seem to have been common to the entire group.

### “THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA”

Northern theory: Galatia is thought to have been the territory of early political history, north of places visited by Paul on his first preaching trip in Acts 13:14-24. Paul’s only recorded visit to this region is in Acts 16:6. If this is the area of “the churches of Galatia,” they would have been congregations resulting from unrecorded work by Paul and his companions. They would necessarily remain unidentified as individual churches. Paul later revisited this area and strengthened the disciples there during his third preaching trip (Acts 18:23).

Southern theory: Galatia was the political division of the Roman Empire known as “Galatia.” It was governed by Rome from about 189 B.C. The inhabitants of this region were allowed to retain their government, headed by a king, until 25 B.C. when they lost their right of self-government. The cities of Antioch [Pisidia], Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium were the objects of Paul’s teaching during his first missionary trip (Acts 13, 14).

Kenneth S. Wuest has observed, “The first theory had a clear field until Sir William Ramsay, a traveler in Asia Minor and a student of the Book of Acts, demonstrated that the Roman province of Galatia included at the time of the founding of the Galatian churches, not only the territory of Galatia, but also the country immediately to the south of it in which were situated the cities of Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.”

Henry C. Thiessen asks several pertinent questions about the location of “the churches of Galatia” to which this epistle was written:

- (1) Is it likely that since Paul always used provincial names of districts, that he would speak of Galatia in any other sense?
- (2) Would it not be strange for Luke to tell us so much about the founding of churches in South Galatia (Acts 13:14-14:23), and for Paul to say nothing about them?
- (3) Does it not seem strange, on the other hand, to think that Paul would write so weighty a letter as the Epistle to the Galatians to churches whose founding is practically passed by in silence by Luke, as would be the case if the Galatian churches were located in North Galatia?
- (4) Would it not be strange also for the Judaizers of Palestine to pass by the most important cities of Iconium and Antioch in South Galatia, where there were a good many Jews, and no doubt, some Jewish Christians, and go to the remoter Galatian country in the north to do their mischievous work?

DATE OF GALATIANS:

- a. Some proponents of the “Southern theory” set the time of the letter before the meeting at Jerusalem when the connection of the Gentiles to the Law of Moses was discussed (Acts 15). This was about 49 A.D. Antioch (Acts 14:28) is the place often chosen as the point of origin of the epistle. Others believe that the letter was not written until about 57 A.D. from either Corinth or Macedonia during Paul’s third preaching trip, following two previous visits by the apostle among these brethren (Acts 16:6; 18:23; Gal. 1:9; 5:21).
- b. The Northern theory sets the time after Paul’s visit to certain disciples in Acts 18:23, about 53-56 A.D. The place of writing might have been Macedonia (Acts 18:18), where Paul “remained a good while,” around 53 A.D., or perhaps Ephesus (Acts 19: 1,10), about 56 A.D. when he spent two years there.

PURPOSE OF GALATIANS:

Paul wrote this letter to address a situation among the churches that had changed drastically since the time of their establishment. This epistle was to be an effort by Paul to restore the original faith and commitment of the Galatian brethren to the gospel of Christ:

- (a) They had once been devoted to Paul (4:14,15)-- but now he had become their enemy (4:16);
- (b) They had once accepted Paul’s apostleship ( 4:14)-- but now they regarded him as dependent on human sources for his teaching (1:11,12);
- (c) They had embraced his teaching of justification by faith (1:9; 3:26,27; 3:2,3)-- but now they depended too heavily on fleshly ordinances (1:6; 3:3);
- (d) They had “made progress” in the gospel (5:7a)-- but now they were hindered from obeying the truth (5:7b; 5:4);

- (e) They had committed to the gospel without the Law of Moses (3:1)-- but now they were trying to be justified by that Law (5:2,4).

MAJOR THEMES IN GALATIANS:

- a. Paul's defense of his apostleship. His adversaries had resorted to an old tactic known as "argumentum ad hominem" [argument to the man]. "If you can't attack the *message*, attack the *messenger*."
- (1) Paul showed that his gospel was not dependent on the other apostles; they supported his preaching but had not instructed him in what to preach.
  - (2) His gospel had a heavenly origin; he had received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ.
- b. Paul's defense of his gospel of justification by faith without works of the Law.
- (1) This was not a new gospel-- it had been preached to Abraham (3:18);
  - (2) The Law was intended to be temporary, a "tutor" (3:25);
  - (3) Their salvation was involved in the resolution of their doubts about the gospel (5:2).

THE MESSAGE OF GALATIANS might reflect the character of many of the people of this region.

Julius Caesar said of them: "The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves and fond of change, and are not to be trusted" (*Gallic Wars*).

Paul said of them: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you...to a different gospel" (Galatians 1:6).

**Note:** Biblical references are to NKJV unless otherwise noted.

**Note:** Abbreviations for Versions: KJV (King James); NKJV (New King James); ASV (American Standard); RSV (Revised Standard); Conf. (Confraternity)

**Note:** Students should have Bibles open to passages discussed and correlate text with the discussion.

## GALATIANS

Paul faced two formidable tasks as he opens this letter to the Galatian churches:

(1) He must rescue the faith of confused minds from the impending peril of spiritual destruction. The Galatian Christians had first heard the gospel of faith perhaps as much as three years earlier. They had “received the gospel” (1:9); they had “run well” for a time (5:7); they had even “suffered many things” for the gospel (3:4). However, even as Paul wrote this letter of warning and encouragement to them, they were “turning away” from what they had before accepted as true and worthy of their devotion (1:6). Certain teachers who desired to “make a good showing in the flesh” (6:12) had “hindered” their obedience to the truth (5:7) and had persuaded the Galatians that Paul’s position on the Law and the gospel was seriously flawed. The gospel, they were being told, is effective to save only if it accomodates some fundamental practices of the Law of Moses such as circumcision (6:12). Paul’s goal must be to convince them that any merging of the Law and the gospel would be spiritually fatal (5:2). They must be brought to understand that “only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham” (3:9).

(2) He must restore the confidence of these struggling Christians in his apostleship and in the authority of his teaching as an apostle. His apostleship was not inferior to that of any other messenger “sent” to reveal God’s present truth (2Peter 1:12), nor was he dependent on any others for his gospel of “salvation by faith in Christ without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28). He was heaven’s messenger, and his gospel was heaven’s message to both Jews and Gentiles everywhere (1:8).

### Chapter One

Verses 1-5-- Paul’s greeting:

1. Paul sometimes calls himself “a servant of Jesus Christ” (e.g., Rom. 1:1; Phil.1:1), sometimes an “apostle of Jesus Christ” (e.g., 1&2Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1), and sometimes simply “Paul” (e.g., 1&2Thess. 1:1).
2. However, he wants to be recognized by the Galatians not just as an apostle *of* Christ but as an apostle both *from* and *through* Jesus Christ and God the Father.
3. It was important that his apostleship not be associated with other men, since his authority had been challenged as coming from the other apostles. Only the Lord Himself must be recognized as responsible for “sending” him to the lost.
4. Others, such as Matthias (Acts 1:15-26) and Timothy (1Tim.1:18; 4:14; 2Tim. 1:6), had been chosen by God, but other people were involved in their selection and/or separation to God’s service.
5. Paul had been both called and appointed to the apostleship as directly as the original twelve. His authority was no less heaven-based than theirs.
6. Of course, a special concession had been made for Paul to become an apostle. The

qualifications for apostleship were: (1) fellowship with the disciples from the time of John's baptism (Acts 1:21); (2) witness to the resurrection of the Christ (Acts 1:22); (3) a specific choosing under divine direction (Acts 1:23-26). It was impossible for Paul to comply with the first requirement, and only by a special personal appearance to him by the Lord could he meet the other two (Acts 22:14,15; 26:16).

7. The chain of authority was clear: God's empowerment of Jesus as His law-giver was validated in the resurrection (Rom.1:4); Christ's empowerment of Paul as His law-giver was validated in the process of a calling and appointment to his apostleship.
8. We know neither the names of the "brethren" who joined with Paul in addressing "the churches of Galatia" nor the names and number of those churches.
9. Jesus had made salvation possible by His sacrifice; the apostles made salvation available by preaching the gospel that delivers sinners from "the present evil age."

Verses 6, 7-- Paul's "wonder" at the Galatians:

1. The apostle "marveled" at their readiness to abandon the message they had previously accepted as truth for one so unlike the first that it must be regarded as a "different gospel."
2. Paul's "marveling" sprang from this most unusual action by the Galatians. Alford says the word is a "word of mildness" that "carries to the guilty conscience even sharper rebuke than a harsher one would." Some think it is a term that expresses a degree of admiration, but this seems totally foreign to Paul's reaction to their behavior.
3. Not only had their defection come as a surprise to Paul but also it had come "soon" after their embrace of the gospel Paul had preached to them. While some scholars believe that "soon" gives support to the "northern theory" of where the Galatian churches were located, the three years or so associated with the "southern theory" might easily be considered as a "short time." The faith of converts considered by the apostle to be sound in the faith would not be expected to erode even so quickly as three years. It was surprising to learn that true believers had made so drastic a change in their thinking about the gospel first preached among the Galatians.
4. Confusion about a *similar* teaching was not the cause of this change. The alternative "gospel" offered to the Galatians by Judaizers was very "different" from that offered earlier by Paul. The differences in their "gospel" and his were substantive, not merely cosmetic.
5. Two "gospels" were impossible. While another doctrine might appear to the shallow-minded to be "good news," thoughtful disciples should easily understand that two messages so fundamentally different in their natures could not both be true.
6. Disciples who had been exposed to these two "gospels" must now choose between them. Paul's apostolic judgment defended one gospel as genuine and disavowed the other as "perverted" and a source of "trouble" to anyone deceived by its pretenses.

**Verses 8, 9-- Paul's uncompromising position on the "two gospels":**

1. Jesus said, "And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matt.15:14). The initial responsibility for false doctrine and its disastrous consequences must lie with the teacher. It is a spiritually fatal error for any teacher to change *any* part of the apostolic gospel.
2. Neither earthly messengers [apostles] nor heavenly messengers [angels] possessed any authority to alter the message entrusted to them by God. Not only did the content of their decrees originate in the mind of the Lord but also the very words they spoke came not from their own choosing but from the Holy Spirit, "comparing spiritual things [thoughts] with spiritual [words]" (1Cor. 2:11-13).
3. The curse of heaven rests upon man or angel who would dare to preach "another gospel." He would be *anathema* ["one on whom the curse falls"--Vine].
4. The irrationality of those who were "turning away" was twofold. First, they were now rejecting Paul's apostolic credentials without cause. Just a short time earlier, they had examined and accepted them as genuine. In the meanwhile, those credentials had not changed at all. Second, in rejecting Paul's apostolic authority now, they were raising doubts about their own judgment. They were guilty of arriving at *two contrary conclusions* from the same evidence!

**Verse 10-- Paul's fundamental mindset as an apostle of Christ:**

1. He had determined always to "do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1John 3:22). The ASV renders Paul's question, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?"
2. His second question, "Do I seek to please men?" seems to be extracted from his first question and to suggest the incongruity of personal popularity with apostleship. His choice of masters had been made long before.
3. There had been a time in Paul's life when it had been very important to him to please certain men by what he did. Then, he had asked letters from the high priest to authorize him to bind and deliver Christians to Jerusalem for prosecution (Acts 9:2). Not only had he imprisoned saints by the authority of the chief priests but also he had voted to put them to death (Acts 26:10). This active opposition to the cause of Christ had been highly pleasing to the enemies of the cross but highly displeasing to God.
4. Paul did not still try to please men in his work as an apostle. He could not "serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). While he was careful to "become all things to all men" that he might "by all means save some" (1Cor. 9:19-23), that maxim only applied to things that did not conflict with principles of truth. Compromise between unnecessary matters could be useful; between right and wrong it was out of the question. [See Paul's differing actions toward Timothy and Titus, Acts 16:3, Gal. 2:3-5.]

**Verses 11, 12-- Paul's declaration of independence:**

1. It was not *new* information that Paul was "making known" to the Galatians. Rather, he was *reaffirming* the inspired origin of his message in the same way that he had claimed its inspiration when he first went among them with the gospel of Christ.
2. There had been no change in Paul as an apostle or in the divine absoluteness of his teaching since his initial preaching to them. Any change that had occurred since the conversion of the Galatians was in *them*.
3. Paul's *independence* as an apostle sprang from the fact that his knowledge of Christ was totally independent of other men, both in its source and in its transmission.
4. Its source was Jesus Christ, not any of the other apostles, and certainly not any non-apostle. Its transmission to him had not passed through any fallible human mind but had been received by *revelation* [*apokalupsis*-- "an expression of the mind of God"-- W.E. Vine] directly from God's mind to his. [See 1Cor. 2:11-13.] Revelation allowed for *no* human error in the doctrine he had taught to any of his converts.

**Verses 13, 14-- Paul's background in Judaism:**

1. The Galatian Christians had "heard" of Paul's religious background prior to his becoming an apostle of Jesus Christ. This report had come to them either from Paul himself or from some other unknown source.
2. Paul's early history suggested strongly that he was a most *unlikely* candidate for the office of apostleship which he now occupied. His upbringing and religious practice had revolved around the principles of Pharisaic Judaism. His pre-conversion passion had been the suppression of anything contrary to those principles. He had been especially devoted to the oppression and prosecution of all followers of the Lord when he "persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it."
3. His physical credentials in combination with his zealous display of dedication to the Law had allowed him to "advance in Judaism" beyond many of his contemporaries. His Jewish heritage was recited to the Philippians as his "confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:4-5).
4. His zeal for the "tradition of his fathers" had caught the attention of Jewish leaders. He not only defended the precepts of Moses but also the traditions that had been imposed upon the nation over time. Many of these traditions promoted behavior opposed to the requirements of the Law, and they were frequently condemned by Jesus [e.g., see Matt. 15:1-9].
5. Paul's exemplary conduct under the Law had been rewarded by the Jewish leadership. Letters of authority had been given to him by the high priest that entrusted him with the arrest and prosecution of Christ's disciples (Acts 9:1,2). He took a prominent role in the murder of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1) and led a violent assault against the early church and "made havoc" of it (Acts 8:3).
6. Prior to his conversion to Christ's religion, there had been *nothing* in Paul's life as a

faithful Jew that anyone could have questioned or that would have led anyone to suspect that he might defect to become a disciple of Christ. Something drastic would be required for such a significant change to take place.

Verses 15, 16a-- Paul's encounter with a miracle:

1. Just such a drastic event occurred when Jesus appeared to Paul [Saul] in a "heavenly vision" on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5; 22:6-10; 26:13-18). He was immediately obedient to the Lord's instructions about his own salvation and about the role that he would play in the salvation of others (Acts 22:14-16).
2. God was "pleased" to call Paul into service as a preacher of Christ, especially to the Gentiles. Things that are *good* for men have always *pleased* the Lord:
  - a. He was *pleased* at everything He had made in the original creation because it was all "very good" for man's physical well-being (Gen. 1:31);
  - b. He was *pleased* to "bruise" Jesus on the cross because that was necessary for man's spiritual well-being (Isa. 53:10);
  - c. He was *pleased* to give His "little flock" the kingdom because that would enhance the opportunities for their salvation (Luke 12:32);
  - d. He was *pleased* with the "foolishness" of gospel preaching because only through the gospel could men learn of the way to heaven (1Cor. 1:21);
  - e. He was likewise *pleased* to send Paul as His apostle to the lost because he had the qualifications that could make him particularly effective among the Gentiles.
3. Unknown to Paul, the Lord had chosen him "from the womb" to do the work entrusted to him when he became an apostle of Christ. His training and activity under the Law of Moses became tools that proved invaluable to him when he was charged with preaching the law of Christ to unsaved Jews.
4. Paul was not the first man to be selected [separated] before his birth to fill a special role in the Lord's plan:
  - a. Isaiah was "called from the womb" to deliver God's will to the nations (Isa. 49:1);
  - b. Jeremiah was chosen as a prophet even before he was "formed in the womb" (Jer. 1:5);
  - c. John the Baptizer was "filled with the Holy Spirit...from his mother's womb" (Lk. 1:15).
5. Years passed before God "called" Paul through His grace. These years allowed Saul to become such a stalwart leader in Jewish law and tradition that his conversion to the religion of Christ would make a powerful impression on other men. Not only would God reveal His Son to the lost *by him* but also He would reveal *in him* [by his conversion] the power [*dunamis*--Rom.1:16,17] of the gospel to convert even those who are far from the truth! The message would be clear: if the gospel could change the heart and life of such a person as Saul, then no man was beyond its reach!

**Verses 16b, 17-- Paul's reaction to a heavenly call:**

1. He did not immediately “confer” with flesh and blood. God’s revelation to him needed no *clarification*. His duty was clear and required no explanation by anybody.
2. He did not immediately “go up to Jerusalem” for *validation* of his revelation by the original apostles. His confidence to accomplish God’s work would lie in Jesus, not in other men.
3. Instead, “immediately” he preached Christ in the synagogues of Damascus and “confounded the Jews” (Acts 9:20-22).
4. After that, he went into Arabia for an indeterminate period of time. Some think his mission there was to preach Christ as he had done in Damascus. Others believe that in Arabia he received additional revelation and spiritual direction from the Lord.
5. He then returned to Damascus to resume his preaching there. He became the object of a plot by the Jews to kill him and escaped only when he was let down over the city wall in a basket (Acts 9:23-25).
6. From Damascus Paul went to Jerusalem and was accepted by Christians there only after Barnabas had recommended him as a genuine convert to Christ. He “went in and out” among the brethren until the Hellenist Jews sought to kill him. Once again, he was rescued by the saints and sent on to Caesarea and Tarsus to continue his work (Acts 9:26-30).
7. The point that Paul was making of his early history as a Christian was that for at least three years he had *no* contact with any other apostle who could have helped him to understand and to preach the truths which he had presented to the Galatian brethren when he first visited them. Only the Lord had taught him what he knew about the gospel of their salvation.

**Verses 18-22-- Paul's isolation from apostolic assistance:**

1. For at least three years Paul had not associated with any other apostle. Even then, he had visited with Peter for only fifteen days. It should be obvious to his critics that fifteen days was much too short a time to master the depths of the gospel of faith. The original apostles were with Jesus for more than three years and still had trouble in understanding what they were expected to preach to others [e.g., see Acts 1:6.].
2. James, the Lord’s brother [See Matt. 13:55; Acts 15:13.], was the only other church “leader” seen by Paul while in Jerusalem during this visit. Paul calls James one of the “other apostles.” Some scholars suppose that he had been made an “official” apostle by God since the calling of the original group. Others conclude that he was an “apostle” only in the same sense as Barnabas (Acts 14:14), who had been “sent” to do a special work for the Lord.
3. Following this short stay in Jerusalem, Paul had gone to Syria and Cilicia, regions far enough from Jerusalem that he would not have encountered any other apostle who could have taught him anything about the gospel.

4. He was for a long time known to the churches outside of Jerusalem and Judea only by reputation. He had not associated with any of them personally and had not received anything from them to help him preach the gospel.

**Verses 23,24-- Paul's reputation among the churches:**

1. The account of Paul's remarkable conversion and his subsequent proclamation of the gospel had made a deep impact on the brethren everywhere. Even where he was unknown personally, Christians marveled at the great change in him. It seems that none doubted the details of his encounter with the Christ or the genuineness of his conversion.
2. All who had reason to know what had happened to this former persecutor of the church now glorified God because of the change that had taken place in him. They did not question the sincerity of *what* he was preaching or the authority by which he spoke.
3. The churches of Judea, who had never had occasion to know firsthand the truthfulness of Paul's claims to apostleship, seemed to have no trouble in accepting those claims *by faith*. They rejoiced in what they had heard from others and what they now believed to be true.
4. The churches of Galatia, on the other hand, could not maintain their faith in a man with whom they *had* associated intimately and whose proofs of apostleship they had seen with their own eyes. It was no wonder that Paul "marveled" that they were "turning away" so soon from things in which they had been so confident just a short time before!

1. The Galatians must accept Paul as an \_\_\_\_\_ sent not by \_\_\_\_\_ but by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The “southern theory” identifies the “churches of Galatia” as churches in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. [See introduction.]
3. Christ saves us from our \_\_\_\_\_ and delivers us from this \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Paul “marveled” that some were \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ to a \_\_\_\_\_ gospel.
5. There is not another \_\_\_\_\_, but some would \_\_\_\_\_ the Galatians by \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.
6. Initially, only one gospel had been \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ and only one gospel had been \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Paul could not still \_\_\_\_\_ men and be a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Paul advanced in \_\_\_\_\_ because of his \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Places visited by Paul following his conversion were: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. He went to \_\_\_\_\_ to see \_\_\_\_\_, with whom he visited for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
11. The only other church leader he saw in Jerusalem was \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_’s \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Paul was unknown by \_\_\_\_\_ to the churches of \_\_\_\_\_, but they were glad that one who had \_\_\_\_\_ them now \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ which he had once tried to \_\_\_\_\_.

IN CHAPTER ONE, Paul confronted the Galatian Christians with the serious error into which they had “so soon” fallen (1:6). Judaizing teachers had come among them and had persuaded many that the doctrine Paul had preached to them earlier was invalid except, as a “new” gospel, it be added to certain long-established ordinances of the Law of Moses. Paul, however, dismissed such a combination as a “perverted” gospel and condemned its advocates (1:8,9). Then he proceeded to prove that his own behavior since his conversion belied any dependence on other apostles for what he was preaching everywhere about salvation apart from the Law.

Chapter Two

**Verses 1-5-- Paul’s defense of “his” gospel:**

1. For fourteen years following his conversion, Paul’s contact with other apostles who could have *taught* him the gospel had been extremely limited. Finally, in response to renewed efforts by the Judaizers, he took Barnabas and Titus to Jerusalem to meet with reputed “pillars of the church” to assure that everyone was “on the same page” about the relationship between the Law and the gospel.
2. Paul and the others were “sent” by the Antioch church [Acts 15:3] in response to a “revelation” whose particulars we do not know. Upon being “received by the church and the apostles and the elders,” they reported the remarkable progress of “their” gospel among the Gentiles [Acts 15:4].
3. Almost immediately, it appears, certain brethren of the Pharisaic persuasion rose up to challenge the validity of their labors, claiming that Gentiles should be commanded to “keep the law of Moses” [Acts 15:5].
4. Apparently, these false brethren attempted to make a test case of Titus, who was a Gentile, and demanded that he be circumcised. This, of course, Paul would not allow.
5. Paul realized that any concession to these Judaizers would be fatal to his work among the Gentiles. It was important that “the truth of the gospel” [salvation by faith in the Lord without works of the Law] continue to be proclaimed among the Galatians as well as among all other Gentiles.
6. Paul was “practicing what he preached” when he refused to compromise with false teaching “even for an hour.” The truth must be *bought*, never sold (Proverbs 23:23).

**Verses 6-8-- Paul’s meeting with “pillars of the church”:**

1. Luke [Acts 15] appears to have omitted this *private* meeting reported by Paul [2:2] between him and those who were of “reputation” among the brethren at Jerusalem.
2. Paul’s purpose was to assure that he had not “run in vain” in preaching faith to the Gentiles. He knew his doctrine was *sound*, but its integrity and effectiveness would be destroyed if these prominent church leaders should decline to endorse it and allowed it

to be compromised by the false teaching of the Judaizers.

3. Paul refused to be intimidated by the “reputations” of those with whom he met. He was confident of his calling to be an apostle. He knew that he preached by the Lord’s inspiration. Still, he was convinced that there had to be agreement among all those who led in the Lord’s work. They must all “speak the same thing” about salvation (1Cor. 1:10).
4. Despite his unwavering confidence in what he was preaching to the Gentiles, it must have been gratifying to Paul to learn firsthand that the essentials of “his” gospel were no different from those of “their” gospel among the Jews.
5. The other teachers “added nothing” to Paul’s understanding of what is now required for men to be saved. “He that believeth and is baptized” (Mark 16:16) was the obedience upon which “every creature” must depend for the forgiveness of sins!
6. Paul had been chosen by Christ to work as the prime mover of Gentiles to salvation by faith (Acts 26:17,18). Similarly, Peter was commissioned to be an effective force in leading Jews to the Lord. [See 1Peter and 2Peter.]
7. It is possible that an understanding was achieved between Paul and the others about making concessions to Jewish converts that could not be made to Gentile believers. It is evident that early Jewish Christians sometimes were allowed to practice as *non-essential options* some of the things they had done while under the Law. [See Paul’s own example in Acts 21:26ff.] Gentiles had never been under the Law and would have no reason to adopt its practices by *custom*. Practices for *religious* reasons were unlawful for them. [See Paul’s treatment of Titus, Gal. 2:3.]
8. Requiring the *essentials* while allowing the *nonessentials* because of previous custom was “effective” among the Jews. Likewise, preaching only the *essentials* of gospel obedience without any of the practices of the Law was similarly successful among the Gentiles.

Verses 9, 10-- Paul’s endorsement by “pillars” of the church:

1. Paul’s word and his work among the Galatians were completely vindicated in a *third* meeting in Jerusalem. His apostleship and his teaching of salvation by faith without works of the Law were endorsed without reservation by men who held the trust of faithful Christians in every place. Even the doubts of these Galatian saints should be swayed by this resounding vote of confidence!
2. Acts 15 provides many more details of this public meeting than Galatians 2. In fact, Luke even reports the individual speeches made to the assembly by Peter and James. Both men, he shows, were totally convinced of the validity of Paul’s work among the Gentiles and gave him the “right hand of fellowship” to continue to preach and work exactly as he had been doing.
3. The only suggestion offered to Paul by these “pillars” was that he “remember the poor.” They possibly had in mind poor Jewish saints who would continue to face

difficult economic circumstances, probably more so than Gentile Christians. Perhaps their suggestion was really intended to encourage Paul to solicit funds from his Gentile converts to ease the poverty of his Jewish brethren.

4. Paul likely had already engaged in such relief efforts (Acts 11:27-30). He probably had done this more than once, and would in the future seek assistance for Jewish Christians from these same Galatian churches about whom he presently entertained some serious concerns (1Cor.16:1,2). He certainly could claim an “eagerness” for such service to his brethren.

Verses 11-14-- Paul’s consistency added credibility to his doctrine:

1. Peter obviously enjoyed great respect as an apostle among the early saints. His influence was widespread, and he was closely watched in what he did as well as in what he said. Perhaps Paul and others were often compared to Peter in things that pertained to their apostleship in the church. Since the Galatian Christians knew that Peter’s apostolic authority predated Paul’s, many of them possibly had concluded that Peter offered the better example to follow in this controversy about *spiritual equality* in the kingdom of God.
2. In his efforts to lead these Galatian churches back to the truth about this issue, Paul was willing to use every argument and illustration available to him. Argumentation was his strong weapon, but illustration may also have an impact on their attitudes.
3. The Galatian brethren may or may not have heard about Peter’s behavior toward the Gentiles in Jerusalem. If they *had*, his bad example might have been received as a good example, and some of them might have been driven further into supporting the error being taught by the Judaizers. In that event, Peter’s misconduct must be exposed and condemned before it could do any further damage to the truth.
4. If the churches *had not* heard how Peter had treated Gentiles at Jerusalem, Paul saw the incident as an opportunity to show them that his gospel [salvation without works of law] once again had been endorsed by Peter as it had been in the “Jerusalem conference.” [See Acts 15:6-12.] This time, the endorsement came not from what Peter *said* but by what he *didn’t say*! His lack of response to Paul’s rebuke was a clear acknowledgement not only of the *truth* of Paul’s *doctrine* about equality in the church but also of his *apostolic authority* to teach and enforce it.
5. The exact circumstances of this encounter are unknown, but at some time following the apparent agreement by all parties that under the gospel of Christ no restrictions remained in the relationships between Jewish saints and Gentile saints, Peter had violated that agreement when he changed his practice of socializing with Gentiles who neither were circumcised nor kept the rituals of the Sabbath.
6. Peter’s abrupt change was *not* in response to a new revelation from Jehovah about how Jews should treat Gentiles as equals in the kingdom, but because of prideful *fear*

of offending “certain” influential Jewish members who were closely associated with James in the Jerusalem church. We must hesitate to charge James with wrongful attitudes toward the Gentiles, but Peter evidently jumped to the conclusion that James might also approve of his changed behavior.

7. The incident in question occurred at Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas remained to teach and preach after they had delivered the report of the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15:35). We do not know why Peter came to Antioch, but it appears that he had continued to eat and freely associate with Gentile saints there as he had done elsewhere (Acts 10:28,48) until the arrival of the Jewish visitors.
8. We cannot even be sure that these Jewish members held a position contrary to Peter’s righteous practice. Perhaps he simply *assumed* [for some reason] that they would *not* approve of his socializing with Gentile saints.
9. There was no issue about what Peter *believed*. Paul’s problem was with what he had *done*. In fact, Peter and other Jewish Christians acted hypocritically when they abandoned contact with the Gentiles because they tried to convince others that what they knew in their hearts to be *wrong* was the *right* thing to do. Their pretense proved to be so effective that even Barnabas, who had rejoiced with Paul in bringing the good news about Gentile equality, was duped into participating in their erroneous activity.
10. Paul was not interested in “pleasing men” [whoever they might be] (1:10) as Peter seemed to be. Nor was he willing to withhold correction from those who needed it. Peter’s sin had been public; his rebuke also should be just as public. Paul’s complaint was not made to others about Peter but was taken “to his face” “before them all.”
11. Peter’s actions were a “compelling” [*anankazo*-- “to constrain...by persuasion”] reason for other Jews to follow his example. But he was lending his influence to *error* rather than to *truth*. If it had been right for him to associate freely with Gentile Christians before the Jerusalem Jews arrived, why was it wrong after they came? The *truth* had not changed, but Peter’s *practice of the truth* had. He “was to be blamed” (verse 11).

**Verses 15-21-- Paul’s plea for consistency between faith and practice:**

1. Some scholars believe that Paul’s rebuke of Peter ends at either verse 14 or verse 17. It seems, however, that a better view would include everything through the end of the chapter, which provides a fuller recitation of Paul’s arguments.
2. The Jews had long been convinced that, as a people, they were far superior to any of the Gentile nations. [e.g., see John 4:9b.] Paul would not subscribe personally to that conviction, but he assumes it here for the sake of argument to the Jews. Even *if* this were so, well-taught Jews knew that even *they* could not be saved by a law which none could keep perfectly. They, like the Gentiles, must appeal to faith in Christ for their justification.
3. Could Jews seek salvation through a gospel that proclaimed equality “for the Jew first, and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16,17) and all the while claim that their per-

sonal discriminations against the Gentiles were sanctioned by the Christ who had sent that gospel to “every creature” (Mark 16:15) in “all the nations” (Matt. 28:19)? CERTAINLY NOT! If discrimination under the gospel is *sinful*, such a practice would make Christ a participant [“minister”] in sin.

4. Making a personal application of a general truth, the apostle condemned the obvious inconsistency of teaching one thing while doing the opposite [as Peter and the others had done at Antioch]. Building and tearing down at the same time would expose anyone [even Paul] as an offender [“transgressor”] against common sense as well as against the law of God which always demands harmony between faith and practice.
5. Paul had invested too much in his status as a Christian and as an apostle of Jesus to make so serious a mistake. He had *died* to the Law and to its discriminatory practices that he might enjoy the spiritual blessings [“living to God”] of a nondiscriminatory gospel. He had *crucified* [completely killed] his old Jewish instincts and attitudes of superiority over Gentile people and had freed *his* heart to embrace without prejudice any sinner willing to give *his* [Jewish or Gentile] heart to a Savior who wants none to perish and who died that all might come to repentance (2Peter 3:9).
6. The Law had “tutored” Paul to realize the superiority of the gospel of faith (Gal. 3:24). It had also convinced him that the Law could offer him no real salvation from his sin because he was unable to keep it without offense to its demands (Gal. 3:11,12).
7. Paul had lived his life since his conversion as a prejudice-free Christian. Also, the Lord had invested in him as a saint and as an apostle. That was too much to ignore just to satisfy human pride or give way to human fear under stressful circumstances. His *faith* [trust] required better things of him when he paused to consider how Jesus “loved me and gave Himself for me.”
8. Paul had resolved long in the past that he would allow nothing to “set aside the grace of God” in his new spiritual life. He always made personal application of what he preached to others: “For by *grace* you have been saved *through faith*...it is the *gift of God*” (Eph. 2:8).
9. If salvation could have been attained through the Law of Moses [or any law], both Christ’s death and Paul’s own conversion *from* the Law would have been pointless. Jesus’ awful suffering to provide salvation and Paul’s own suffering to proclaim salvation would both be in “vain,” and everything Paul stood for as an apostle would be meaningless.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ years passed before Paul went up by \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. This visit was first recorded by \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ (reference).
3. \_\_\_\_\_, who was a \_\_\_\_\_, was not compelled to be \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ seemed to be “\_\_\_\_\_.”
5. It was suggested that Paul remember the \_\_\_\_\_. Was he willing? \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ rebuked \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ because he separated himself from the \_\_\_\_\_ and refused to \_\_\_\_\_ with them.
7. Even \_\_\_\_\_ became involved with the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ who had come from \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Jews who lived like \_\_\_\_\_ should not compel \_\_\_\_\_ to live like \_\_\_\_\_.
9. A man is not \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the law but by \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
10. “...is \_\_\_\_\_ therefore a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_? Certainly \_\_\_\_\_!”
11. Those who \_\_\_\_\_ again what they have \_\_\_\_\_ make themselves \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Paul had \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ that he might \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
13. He was \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ so that \_\_\_\_\_ could \_\_\_\_\_ in him.
14. Paul had faith in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ him and \_\_\_\_\_ for Paul.
15. Jews did not set aside the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ when obeying the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ could not come by the \_\_\_\_\_.

IN CHAPTER TWO, Paul continued to press his independence as an apostle and preacher of the doctrine of salvation by faith without the works of Moses' Law. He pointed to the endorsement extended to him by "church pillars" in Jerusalem and to an incident in which he had rebuked the apostle Peter for inconsistent behavior toward Gentile Christians. Any person who placed Peter's apostolic authority above Paul's would find it hard to explain why Paul's rebuke had gone unanswered. It should be obvious to the Galatians, as it had been clear to Peter, that no one versed in the gospel of Christ can challenge the truth that neither Jew nor Gentile should seek righteousness through any part of any law.

Chapter Three

Verses 1-6-- Paul's questions for "foolish" victims of Judaizers:

1. *"Who bewitched you?"* "Bewitch" [*baskaino*] means, first, "to slander, to prate about anyone"; then "to bring evil on a person by feigned praise, or mislead by an evil eye" (W.E. Vine). The word suggests both the ungodly tactics used by the Judaizers and the "foolishness" of their prey who had failed to "test the spirits" (1John 4:1) before accepting their false teachings about the Law and the gospel.
  - a. Christ had been "clearly portrayed" ["openly"--ASV] to them by Paul and other faithful teachers as crucified for their salvation. Doubtless, their portrayal had included some of the same "infallible proofs" by which the apostles themselves had been convinced about the message of the gospel (Acts 1:3). Nevertheless, their efforts had been ignored when the Judaizers had subverted the truth. Vine, quoting from his Notes on Galatians, makes these remarks:

In Gal. 3:1, however, it is probably used in another sense, unexampled in the Scriptures but not uncommon in the language of the day = "proclaimed," "placarded" as a magistrate proclaimed the fact that an execution had been carried out, placarding his proclamation in a public place. The Apostle carries on his metaphor of the "evil eye;" as a preventive of such mischief, it was common to post up charms on the walls of houses, a glance at which was supposed to counteract any evil influence to which a person may have been subjected.
  - b. The Galatians had not merely been duped by a harmless deception. Their acceptance of error was preventing them from continuing to "obey the truth." Paul warned the Thessalonians that Jesus will *"take vengeance on those who...do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (2Thess. 1:8).
2. *"Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"*
  - a. *Signs and wonders* had been done before the Galatians during the first preaching of the gospel (Acts 14:3). These demonstrated that the message advanced by Paul

- was endorsed by the powers of heaven (Mark 16:20). Perhaps the Galatians had “received the Spirit” [i.e., the connection between the Spirit and the gospel of faith] when they had observed the workings of miracles by gospel preachers.
- b. Another possibility is that they had “received the Spirit” when God “sent forth the Spirit” into their hearts, impressing them that a true Father/child relationship was available to them by the gospel of love (Gal. 4:6). Such closeness was impossible under the restraints imposed by Moses’ law.
  - c. Similarly, they had “received the Spirit” when they had begun to “walk in the Spirit,” not “fulfilling the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). Also, they were “led by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:18) and they “lived in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25) when they had first committed themselves to His control after obeying the gospel.
  - d. More likely, the Galatian churches had been favored with spiritual gifts and had been able to witness the power of the Holy Spirit in their own personal manifestations. It appears that the bestowal of such powers was common among the first-century churches. [See e.g., 1Cor. 1:7; 14:1ff; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:7,8,30.]
  - e. Miraculous powers were not attached to the keeping of the Law. Those who had disturbed the faith of believers through their advocacy of the Law had never performed any miraculous works among the Galatians as the gospel preachers had done, and they certainly had never imparted supernatural powers to any others.
3. “*Are you so foolish?*” If the Spirit had done such extraordinary things among them in connection with the gospel of faith without works, and since the proponents of the Law had proved themselves helpless to offer similar gifts, how could *wisdom* dictate any course to *wise men* other than to remain faithful to the doctrine through which the powers had come? They clearly had enjoyed “perfection” [completeness] while they held to Paul’s message about Jesus. Had the Law of the flesh added anything to their spiritual life that made them any *more* complete? Obviously not!
  4. “*Have you suffered so many things in vain?*” We are not informed about what things the Galatians had suffered for the sake of truth. Paul declared to Timothy that “...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2Tim. 3:12), so no doubt their problems had been very real. But to give up the truth for which they had made sacrifices would be to make those sacrifices worth nothing. Faithfulness, on the other hand, would turn their suffering into a badge of honor and assure for them the precious “crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).
  5. “*Does He [God] do His wondrous works through the law or through the gospel of Christ?*” The question was rhetorical. The answer was clearly evident.
    - a. God’s recognition of their righteousness had been expressed in His rich supply of the Spirit’s benefits, especially the miraculous signs and wonders done among them following their acceptance of Paul’s gospel.
    - b. Those manifestations of God’s pleasure likely had ceased in those who had fallen prey to the Judaizers, and what did that indicate to thoughtful people? God has

always attached His special blessings to obedient lives and has withheld them from any who choose to govern their lives by something other than His revealed will.

- c. Abraham was a prime example of this principle. It was not by subscribing to any kind of *law* that made him righteous in God's eyes. Rather, he pleased God by his *unwavering faith* in what God told him in spite of "logical" reasons to question the promises made to him.

Verses 7-9-- Paul's rescue of Abraham from the hands of the Judaizers:

1. Apparently, the Judaizers had made much of their supposed connection to Abraham as they sought to subvert the minds of the Galatians. The Jews gloried in their physical descent from the patriarch. They supposed that God's blessings to Abraham had all descended to them in a way that could never be altered. In fact, their relationship to Jehovah was defined by the connection they enjoyed with the greatest man in their national history.
2. Gentiles, of course, could never take pride in any such relationship as the Jews boasted. But, while a *physical* link with Abraham was forever denied them, they were told that they might join themselves to that giant of righteousness in a *spiritual* affiliation.
3. Either by assertion or by insinuation, the Judaizers appear to have placed Abraham's righteousness in the context of keeping a *law*. Perhaps they even were bold enough to claim that compliance with a law similar to or identical with Moses' law [or parts thereof] was the deciding factor in the patriarch's obtaining favor with Jehovah.
4. Having established that connection, it was an easy step to convince their victims that obedience to Moses' law still provided the desired relationship with God. They held Abraham hostage as their "proof" that they could give the Galatians something that Paul and other gospel teachers could not.
5. It was important that Abraham be "rescued" from his "captors." Once for all, the Galatians must *know* [be convinced] that using Abraham as an example of pleasing God by complying with *law* was totally wrong.
6. "Sons" of Abraham are identified by following his example of trusting in God rather than by trying to keep a law which he never kept.
7. The same gospel ["good news"] that had been preached to the Galatians by Paul and others had first been preached to Abraham. That "good news" gospel, first *spoken* to the patriarch by Jehovah and later *written* [Scripture] in Genesis by Moses for the instruction of the whole Jewish nation, had as its most significant message: "through your offspring *every* nation will receive a blessing" (Gen. 12:1-3,7).
  - a. This "blessing" would be spiritual, not physical. It would "justify" the nations.
  - b. It would bless all nations through faith, not through law.
  - c. The promise was made to Abraham "beforehand," i.e., many years before it would see its fulfillment in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ.
  - d. The promise of justification was made many years before the law of Moses was given to Abraham's physical descendants, as Paul will note in verse 17.

8. “And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). Such trust in Jehovah was characteristic of Abraham throughout their relationship. That relationship was maintained by his trusting and obedient *faith*, not by his perfect compliance with some rigid and unforgiving *law*.
9. All who now would be blessed as Abraham was blessed must receive that blessing “with” [in like manner as] the “father of the faithful” (Rom. 4:16), who served God *by faith* and not *by law*.

Verses 10-14-- Paul’s appeal to the obvious:

1. Proponents of Moses’ law seemed to forget that there was one fundamental flaw in their proposition: justification under law always requires perfect obedience to the law. Law makes *demands*; it does not forgive *breaches* of its demands.
2. There was no reason except duplicity why the Judaizers had suppressed the warning plainly *written* in the law they were advocating to the Gentiles: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in *all things* which are written in the book of the law, to do them” (Deut. 27:26; 28:15). They had convinced the Gentiles that they need obey only the “easy” things of the Law, not the things that were “hard” for them to do.
3. It should be evident to any thinking person that no man can be saved by Moses’ law because all men who had ever tried it had failed. That is true of any law: “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things” (1John 3:20). We are self-condemned in our consciences and condemned by God in our sin when we err from law, even in the smallest way, by *doing* wrong or by *failing to do* right.
4. If not by law, then how can anyone be justified before his God? Quoting from Habakkuk 2:4, the answer rings out, “the just shall live by faith.”
5. Justification through any law is necessarily based on perfect compliance (Lev. 18:5), which means that those who pursue that course are doomed to fail even before they begin.
6. Jews had sought salvation through Moses’ law but were *cursed* by that law. Gentiles thought to establish a relationship with God [or gods] through a law of conscience (Rom. 2:14,15) or through their pagan religions (Acts 17:22). They, too, were *cursed* in their failed attempts at justification and righteousness.
7. Only Christ can redeem men, Jews or Gentiles, from the *curse* of punishment inflicted when [any] law is broken. He accomplished this, not by devising a law that could be kept perfectly, but by offering a law [system] that did not demand perfection but provided forgiveness when men fell short of its dictates. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).
8. Crucifixion was Christ’s solution to man’s curse under law. He willingly died in a manner that branded Him a transgressor (Luke 22:37) and presumed God’s displeasure [“curse”] at the behavior that had brought about the crucifixion (Deut. 21:22,23).

9. When Jesus provided access to the “promise of the Spirit” [salvation] by dying in man’s stead, the blessing of Abraham (verse 8) could be shared by “all nations.” That was especially good news to the Galatian Christians, most of whom were Gentiles. They had been “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise,” and they had been excluded from whatever advantages were enjoyed by the Jews through the Law of Moses. But now they needed to be jealous for *none* of those things-- they could receive the promise of the Spirit through FAITH!

Verses 15-18-- Paul’s affirmation of God’s covenant:

1. The prophet Isaiah had foretold, “I, Jehovah...will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles...(42:6--ASV), and, “Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you” (55:5). Over time, prophecies such as these had come to mean to the Jews that whatever spiritual blessings might come to Gentiles must come *through* Israel.
2. That idea was extended into a conviction among the Jews that Gentiles could “run to them for light” only by embracing Judaism and submitting to the Levitical rituals of Moses’ Law. Only in this way could the promise of blessing “all nations” in Abraham be fulfilled. Thus, they insisted that all Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses-- in effect become Jews-- if they were to be saved (Acts 15:5).
3. It was not the intention of the Judaizers that the gospel be *ignored* by the Gentiles or by the Jews. Both must recognize that God had added the Law to the promise He had made to Abraham to bless “all nations.” Jews and Gentiles alike must therefore obey both Moses’ Law and Christ’s law to obtain the desired reward.
4. This falsehood apparently had been viewed favorably by many of the Galatian Christians, which accounts for their “so soon turning away” from the *true* message of the gospel, which was that salvation comes through “faith in Christ and not by the works of the law” (Gal. 2:16).
5. Paul addressed this issue with an illustration that would help them understand why the arguments of the Judaizers were wrong. Even “in the manner of men” no one dares to change the terms of a [legally] confirmed covenant [*diatheke*-- “to place between two”] without the prior consent of all parties to the contract.
6. Even Jewish zealots would never affirm that *God* had annulled [*atheteo*-- “to render without place or standing”] the promises made to Abraham, and *the nation* surely had never set them aside, because their national identity depended on their fulfillment.
7. What they *did* claim, however, was that the Law had been added [*diatasso*-- “to make additional prescriptions”] to the promises as conditions to be met before the blessings pledged to “all nations” would be granted. The Judaizers were handling *God’s* covenant in a way that was not allowed even when dealing with covenants made by *men*.
8. There were two fundamental reasons why the promises made to Abraham and the

Law given to Israel could not be associated:

- a. The promise of a blessing for “all nations” was not connected with national Israel in any way, including the keeping of their national Law;
  - b. The promise antedated the Law by *many years*, and anything added to it would change it and thus annul it. No one wanted that.
9. Jehovah made *three* “promises” [plural] to Abraham: (1) a great nation; (2) a land; (3) the blessing of all nations (Gen. 12:2,3,7). His “seed” were included in the promises. Of course, the great-nation promise and the land promise were intended only for Abraham’s physical descendants [“seed”--ASV], and both promises were to be fulfilled in the days of David and Solomon. These promises were not designed to bless any people other than the Jews.
  10. The “all nations” promise, however, was directed toward “every creature” in “all nations” (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47) and would be fulfilled in a “Seed” yet to be personally identified by Jehovah.
  11. Paul by inspiration identifies the “Seed” of the “all nations” promise as “one Seed”-- Jesus Christ-- and not as “many seeds”-- the nation of Israel. Therefore, the Gentiles did not need the Jews *in any way* to be saved, but they needed the Christ *in every way*!
  12. The Law of Moses came four hundred and thirty years too late to be any part of the covenant between God and Abraham, and thus between God and “all nations.” Paul refers to the time between the Jews’ entrance into Egypt and their exodus into the wilderness. He evidently adopted the chronology of Moses in Exodus 12:40, although the Alexandrian [Septuagint] Old Testament assigns only 215 years for the Egyptian sojourn. Keil and Delitzsch [Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament] defend the 430 years as “not only in harmony with the prediction in Gen.15:13, where the round number is employed in prophetic style, but may be reconciled with the different geneological lists...” They say further:

The view held by the Seventy became traditional in the synagogue, and the Apostle Paul followed it in Gal. 3:17, where he reckoned the interval between the promise to Abraham and the giving of the law as 430 years, the question of chronological exactness having no bearing on his subject at the time.
  13. God could not have covenanted for *two contrary* means of “blessing all nations.” The *second* [law] would have annulled the *first* [promise]. They could not exist together. Unless the Jews were willing to give up the promise, they must abandon any connection between the Law and salvation.
  14. Jehovah had confirmed by repetition the covenant of promise, to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, as the means by which all nations would be blessed. [See Gen. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.] The Law could not change His covenant with Abraham, which promised salvation by faith apart from any works of law.

Verses 19-25-- Paul's evaluation of Moses' Law:

1. Anticipating his critics' objection to the arguments for salvation apart from the law, the apostle puts their question in his own words: "What purpose then does the law serve?" If it was never intended to lead men to salvation, then why did Jehovah both-er to give it, and why did the Jews try to keep it?
2. Paul's response to such objections was fourfold:
  - a. Answer One-- Verse 19----- The Law was "added" because of transgressions;
  - b. Answer Two-- Verse 22----- The Law "confined" all under sin;
  - c. Answer Three-- Verse 23-- The Law "kept" the Jews under guard;
  - d. Answer Four-- Verse 24--- The Law was a "tutor" to bring Jews to Christ.
3. Answer One: Moses' Law was "added" to other things for which the Jews were responsible to God because of transgressions until the "Seed" [Christ] should come to provide salvation by faith. "But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2Tim. 3:13). So it was in the early days of the earth, when Jehovah "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). The utter deterioration of morality necessitated man's destruction by the flood. Lest that occur again, and lest God's offer of salvation through Jesus become of no interest to depraved souls, one nation was given a law of morality and discipline to assure the preservation of spiritually-sensitive people "made ready" for the Lord (Lk.1:17 ).
  - a. The significance of the Law was emphasized by the employment of angels in its delivery. [See Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2.] While the details of their involvement are withheld, angels conferred a sense of importance and urgency to the Law that would generate respect and obedience by those receiving it.
  - b. Moses served as a "mediator" [*mesites/mesos-- "middle/midst"*] *between* God and Israel in the transmission of the Law. Since the Law was a covenant between two parties, Jehovah and the Jews, each party needed representation to the other. In a "step-down" arrangement, it would seem that angels stood between God and Moses, and Moses stood between the angels and the people. In that sense, there were multiple mediators, but clearly "a mediator" refers to the role of Moses.
  - c. Perhaps Paul's implication is that since God spoke *directly* to Abraham in giving him the promise of salvation by faith, and since He spoke *indirectly* in giving the Law to the Jews, the promise is superior to the Law and should not be connected to it. Jehovah acted *alone and absolutely in His Divinity* in the first transaction, but in conjunction with *humanity* in the second.
  - d. Is there competition between the promises and the Law, or was the Law needed to provide something to man that the promises could not offer for his salvation? Did the giving of the Law hinder the fulfillment of the promises? Certainly not! The Law helped to prepare some to *receive* the promises of Jehovah. If righteousness

were possible through obedience to the demands of [any] *law*, then the addition of Moses' Law would have given additional opportunities for God to save the lost, and He would surely have made such a provision. Righteousness could have come by the Law as well as by the promise.

4. **Answer Two:** The [Old Testament] Scripture was intended to “confine” [shut up, conclude, consign] all men under sin. Paul has already quoted from Deuteronomy 27:26, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in *all things* which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Other passages warned that perfection was required for justification for those who sought it by the Law. All sincere persons must realize that such perfection was far beyond their capability; hence, they were shut up by their sin from all sense of spiritual ease. Damnation was their inevitable destination.
  - a. When men are convicted of their *need* for redemption, only then will they be receptive to the *offer* of redemption. The Law revealed the *need*; the promise of a Savior who would save those with faith became an attractive *offer* through the gospel. There must be “takers” before Jesus can become the “giver” of freedom.
  - b. The promise of righteousness by faith, first made to Abraham and then renewed to all men through the gospel of Christ, must not be construed to mean that salvation now is by “faith only,” apart from any form of obedience on the sinner’s part. That was never God’s intention. Twice it is said that God promised the blessing [of redemption] to “all nations” through faithful Abraham because he had obeyed God’s voice (Gen. 22:18), kept His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws (Gen. 26:4). Faith without man’s *imperfect* obedience can no more save a sinner than law without *perfect* obedience (James 2:24)!
5. **Answer Three:** The Law kept Israel under guard until faith was revealed. The regulations of the Law were designed to maintain the nation’s identity as a people and to promote uniformity in their relationship to Jehovah. Diversity in religious and civil standards among the people would foster digression from Jehovah and render corrective discipline very difficult. True, oftentimes the Law’s guard over the people didn’t work very well because of their obstinate and rebellious hearts. Still, without the restrictions of Moses’ Law, Israel would have been far less ready to receive the Christ when He came.
6. **Answer Four:** The Law became a “tutor” to bring the Jews to Jesus and His salvation.
  - a. A “tutor” was not a teacher of children but a servant [slave] who accompanied the children to the teacher. A tutor was responsible for the *safe conduct* of his charges. He selected the route to be traveled, making sure that the students arrived on time.
  - b. The Law was not intended to be Israel’s ultimate teacher about Jesus Christ and His gospel message. Actually, there was much said about Jesus in the Old Testament, but much of that was veiled in the language of prophecies and figures. The goal of developing a saving faith in the hearts of the people was left to the work of

the Savior Himself, personally and through His apostles.

- c. The Law was able to point its charges [the Jews] in the right direction as it “accompanied” them toward faith in the Lord. It taught them something about the awareness of sin and the need for forgiveness; it warned them of the necessity of their obedience and of constant diligence lest they fall away from Jehovah’s pleasure.
- d. The Law also played a significant role in assuring that Israel was “in the right place at the right time” to get the most from contacts with their Redeemer. It was only when the “fullness of the time” had come that God brought the two parties-- Teacher and students-- together for the best learning and the most doing (Gal. 4:4).
- e. The services provided by the “tutor” are no longer needed once the parties have been brought together. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”(John 1:14), and no one has any more need for a “tutor.” Each one can find his own way to the Son of God through study and faith in His written record (Rom. 10:17).

Verses 26-29-- Paul’s reassurance to both Jews and Gentiles:

1. ALL [Jews and Gentiles alike] can now “find” their Teacher and develop their own saving faith in Him without the services of any “tutor,” such as the Law offered the Jews before the time came to fulfill God’s promise to bless “all nations.”
2. Israel had been favored to have a tutor who gave them a religious advantage over other people. However, its services had been completed and were no longer needed by the Jews. The Gentiles, who never had such a guide as the Law, certainly had no need for one now. Faith was available to “every creature” in “all nations” through the gospel that Paul and others were taking into the whole world.
3. The full realization of God’s promise to “all nations” through Abraham had come to those, and only to those, who had been “baptized into Christ” and had “put Him on” as their new spiritual identity before God. The Son of God enjoys a special relationship with His Father. Jews and Gentiles who had formed a special relationship with the Son [by “putting Him on” in baptism] also could enjoy a special relationship with the same Father.
4. There are no physical distinctions to be made among those who seek justification by faith in Christ. There are no Jews or Greeks; no slaves or freemen; no males and females. There are just hungry souls, all alike in their need for forgiveness and comfort. All have the same opportunities to serve a loving Savior. Each faithful individual enjoys the prospect of great rewards identical to those anticipated by every other seeker.
5. Gentile Christians should not be concerned that they were in any way at a disadvantage to the Jews because of their background in which Moses’ Law played no part. They had “caught up” with everybody else in their pursuit of righteousness if they were “in Christ.” Through faith in the Savior and obedience to the commands of His gospel, they had inherited every blessing that God had included for Abraham’s “heirs” in the glorious “all nations” promise made to him many years earlier.

1. "O \_\_\_\_\_ Galatians! Who has \_\_\_\_\_ you that you should not \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_."
2. The Galatians had received the \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and not by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. God supplied the \_\_\_\_\_ and worked \_\_\_\_\_ among them, not by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ but by the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ preached the \_\_\_\_\_ beforehand to \_\_\_\_\_, promising that in him all \_\_\_\_\_ would be \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ redeemed men from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ when He became a \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ on a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. No one can \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ after it had been \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ came \_\_\_\_\_ years after the \_\_\_\_\_ to Abraham.
8. The law was \_\_\_\_\_ because of \_\_\_\_\_ until the \_\_\_\_\_ should come ; it was \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ and given by the \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ all men under \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Jews were kept by the law under \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ that would \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The \_\_\_\_\_ was a \_\_\_\_\_ to bring the \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, but now they are no longer under a \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ has come.
12. All can be \_\_\_\_\_ of God through \_\_\_\_\_ if they are \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_ and put on \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Abraham's \_\_\_\_\_ now belong to \_\_\_\_\_ and are \_\_\_\_\_ according to the \_\_\_\_\_.

ADDENDUM 1-- Chapter *THREE*-- CHART -- “*TEST ALL THINGS*” (1Thes. 5:21)

LAW OF WORKS

Chapter 3

GOSPEL OF FAITH

1. No Blessings of Spirit thru Word	-v.2-	1. Blessings of Spirit thru Word-- Acts 2:38; 2Cor.6:16-18
2. Perfection Impossible	-v.3-	2. Perfection Possible-- Col.2:10; 4:12
3. Suffering in Vain	-v.4-	3. Suffering Invested in Heaven-- Ro.8:18
4. No Miracles to Validate Teaching	-v.5-	4. Miracles to Validate Teaching-- Mk.16:20
5. Not Sons of Abraham	-v.6,7-	5. Sons of Abraham-- John 8:39
6. Unjust [Imperfect] Men Cursed-- 1John 3:20	-v.10- 12-	6. Just [Imperfect] Men Free from Curse-- 1John 3:20
7. No Redemption Possible-- Heb.10:4	-v.13-	7. Redemption Possible
8. No Blessings of Abraham-- Gen.12:3	-v.14-	8. Blessings of Abraham-- Gen.12:3
9. Living Under Invalid Covenant	-v.15-	9. Living Under Valid Covenant
10. No Inheritance w/o Christ -- “Seeds”-- Gen.12:3	-v.16- 18-	10. Inheritance in Christ-- “Seed”-- Gen.12:3
11. A Temporary Law	-v.19-	11. A Permanent Promise-- Mt.28:20
12. A Limited Mediator--Moses	-v.19, 20-	12. An Unlimited Mediator--Christ
13. No Righteousness Available	-v.20-	13. Righteousness Available-- Ro.4:13
14. A Temporary Tutor (Guide)	-v.24, 25-	14. A Permanent Teacher--Christ-- John 8:32
15. Not Sons of God	-v.26-	15. Sons of God
16. Not Abraham’s Spiritual Seed	-v.29-	16. Abraham’s Spiritual Seed
17. Not Heirs of Promise-- Gen.12:3 (a) Land-- taken away (b) Great Nation--10 tribes lost (c) Seeds-- no blessing to all--Jn.4:9	-v.29-	17. Heirs of Promise-- Gen 12:3 (a) Enduring land--2Cor.5:1,2 (b) Great Spiritual Nation--Rev.7:9 (c) “Seed”-- blessing to all-- Mt.28:18

CHAPTER THREE was largely devoted by Paul to establishing that neither Jew nor Gentile is heir to the righteousness of Abraham by being connected to the Law of Moses. Apparently, the Judaizers had insisted that a *physical* relationship with the patriarch was essential for justification through the gospel. Such a relationship for the Gentiles, of course, was impossible, but they were offered an acceptable alternative to subscribe to certain *physical* practices of the Law. But righteousness had never come through law because man cannot keep *any* law perfectly. Faith, not law, had always pleased God.

Chapter Four

Verses 1-7-- Slavery and childhood under law:

1. The Jews boasted of being “children of Jehovah” under the Law of Moses. They also disparaged Gentiles who, they contended, were “slaves” to sin under whatever law they followed. Obviously, children enjoy a great advantage over slaves.
2. Paul contends, however, that there is *no* advantage until children are mature enough to be entrusted with the master’s inheritance. Until that time, they must be guided and disciplined by guardians and stewards. The Jews had been kept “under guard” by the Law prior to the coming of the gospel (Gal. 3:23).
3. Childhood is a time of *ignorance* and *learning* by trial and error; a time of making mistakes and changing direction.
4. Israel had received the Law by which they could be guided to learn by experience that submission to Jehovah was the only sensible course to follow. This training should have prepared them to accept Christ as God’s Lawgiver.
5. “The elements of the world” [sinful practices] had enslaved the Jews in sin as surely as those same practices had bound the Gentile nations; all were condemned for sinning and falling short of the “glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
6. The Law of Moses was not the *inheritance* promised by God to Abraham and to his descendants. Nor were the laws which governed the Gentiles. *No law could forgive sin!* Law could only provide a small “sprinkling” of blessings compared to the real “inheritance” which would send “showers of blessing” (Ezek. 34:26).
7. The Jews were like minor children and the Gentiles like slaves. None were ready to inherit God’s kingdom, take the role of mature sons, and function effectively in faithfully using the Lord’s inheritance.
8. Not until times were “full” [ready] did Jehovah act to bestow His inheritance on sinful Jews and Gentiles. Preparation was effected mainly in Israel, but many Gentiles were also brought nearer to the True God by contact with things Jewish [e.g., Cornelius, Acts 10:1, and a “certain” centurion, Luke 7:5].

9. The Jews were trained [restrained] by the Law of Moses; the Gentiles by a basic moral law (Rom. 2:14,15). Both were in bondage to physical things under physical religions.
10. God had a plan and a timetable for providing spiritual maturity in Christ (Eph. 1:4,5):
  - a. His plan: His Son would live sinlessly among men (1Pet. 2:21,22). He alone would need no sacrifice to be offered for Himself. [See Heb. 7:27.]
  - b. His plan: His Son would be born of a woman, and His human body would provide a sacrifice of blood [life] in exchange for man's life;
  - c. His plan: His Son would be born subject to the Law of Moses. By keeping the Law perfectly, He would "condemn sin in His flesh" (Rom. 8:3). No man could thereafter claim that sin was by *compulsion* and not by *choice*;
  - d. His timetable: The moral discipline of the Law, the admonitions of the prophets, and the numerous afflictions that followed disobedient actions all contributed toward making some Jews "a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17);
  - e. His timetable: Significant developments within the Roman Empire [e.g., peace, the use of *Koine Greek*, a good system of roads, etc.] proved advantageous to the spreading of the gospel among many nations.
11. God also had a purpose in His plan:
  - a. To *redeem* those under law [not just *the law*]. "But that no one is justified by (the) law in the sight of God is evident" (Gal. 3:11). All "under law" were *lost* ;
  - b. To finally *bestow true sonship* on all believers. Jews and Gentiles alike had been relieved of their wardship and bondage and had been [fully] adopted ["taken into a special relationship"--Webster] as mature and trusted sons into the "family business" of the kingdom of God.
12. Baptism into Christ had introduced all believers into the blessings of sonship. The Spirit had been sent [through the word and perhaps in miraculous powers] to assure them of His pleasure with the believers. "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..." (Romans 8:16).
13. The Spirit [through the word] first gives us the confidence that God is "Abba [Aramaic--"Father"], "Father" [Greek-- *pater*]. Then, we [Jew or Gentile] can confidently respond, "Abba, Father," (Rom. 8:15) because we know we are God's sons (1Jn. 2:3).
14. Former slaves of law had thrown off their bonds when they obeyed Jesus and could rejoice in a newly-found freedom which included the inheritance promised only to true sons of God.

Spiritual slaves (who became)----- Spiritual sons (who became)----- Spiritual heirs

Verses 8-12-- A relapse into ignorance:

1. Gentile nations had worshiped various gods in ignorance (Acts 17:30). These Galatians were no exception:
  - a. The people at Lystra were very susceptible to ignorant worship (Acts 14:11-13.

They would have even sacrificed to Paul and Barnabas had they been permitted to do so;

- b. At nearby Ephesus, other Gentiles believed that the image of Diana that they worshiped had fallen directly out of heaven (Acts 19:24,27,35).
2. Ignorant idolators had now been privileged to *know* [approve/receive] God and to *be known* [approved/received] by Him. Earth's greatest treasure had been brought to them in earthen vessels (2Cor. 4:7), but now they had exchanged that treasure for "junk" ["weak and beggarly elements"] with no value at all. They had swapped their freedom in Christ for the slavery of ignorant religion again-- "O foolish Galatians!"
3. Perhaps some would deny Paul's accusations and still claim to be free. For them, the apostle cites specific examples of their bondage. They had bound themselves again to the observance of numerous religious holy days and to the multitude of rituals attending those exercises: days, months, seasons, years- on and on- in rigorous and repressive requirements. How different from the simplicity of the Lord's Day worship which they enjoyed when they first learned the gospel!
4. No wonder Paul was "afraid" for them. Unless they could be persuaded of their foolish choices and could be turned again to the Lord's way, his work among them [on *their* part, not *his*] would have been "in vain." Nothing is more disappointing and frustrating than to realize that hard work has been done with nothing to show for it.
5. Paul knew what it meant to suffer to be free in Christ, and he guarded his liberty in the Lord jealously (Gal. 5:1). Perhaps they had encountered obstacles to their faithfulness, but their sacrifices had been slight compared to Christ's sacrifices for them (Heb. 12:3,4). They shared common ground in suffering for the gospel; he urged them to share common ground with him in perseverance and loyalty to a merciful Savior.
6. Paul was not personally offended at them just because they had been offended at Jesus. It was not his own *reputation* but their *salvation* that mattered to him. He was willing to take less that they might take more (Rom. 9:3).

Verses 13-20-- "For old times' sake," brethren:

1. Paul would not want the Galatian defectors to realign themselves with the gospel because of any personal attachment to him as a friend. Faithfulness must not rest on a foundation of personal relationships. It is to Christ, not men, that we are loyal.
2. Nevertheless, it was important that these people realize that Paul's personal feelings for them were the same as always. His love and concern for their welfare had not diminished. Any change between them was on *their* part, not his.
3. The details of Paul's "physical infirmity" that was attached to their introduction to the gospel are unrevealed. Perhaps it was related to the problem mentioned in 2Cor. 12:7,8). Despite his affliction, the Galatians had treated him with the love and respect they might have given to an "angel" from God, or even to Christ Himself.

4. The closeness of their relationship, Paul knew, had been a blessing to them as well as to him. He was confident that they would have made any possible sacrifice for him. His rather extreme illustration is sometimes used to identify Paul's "physical infirmity" as some serious problem with his eyesight.
5. The apostle was now regarded by many as an enemy. Their attitude toward him had changed because their attitude toward the truth he preached had changed first.
6. The Judaizers sought to move the Galatians' admiration and respect from Paul to themselves. Of course, the apostle was never jealous for the praise of others, but he knew that, unlike his own friendship which was intended to benefit them spiritually, their new teachers were motivated by other objectives.
7. There would be no criticism from Paul of the "new gospel" they were embracing if it were a "good thing," but it wasn't. It *excluded* them not only from an important personal relationship with Paul but also, more importantly, from the unique benefits of the true gospel he had delivered to them some time earlier.
8. Paul had been their "father" in the gospel through his teaching (1Tim. 1:2; 1Thes. 2:11). His work had led them to be "born again" (John 3:3-5), and Christ had been "formed" in them as their "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).
9. Unfortunately, that happy story was headed for an unhappy ending, unless he could persuade them to re-form Christ in their hearts and to make a renewed effort to be loyal to Him regardless of any unfavorable circumstances.
10. Paul appears to be somewhat frustrated that the distance between them was a hindrance to the positive resolution of a troubling situation. Perhaps if he could be with them personally rather than in a letter, he could more effectively move their faith in the right direction and restore a cherished relationship with them.

**Verses 21-31-- Listen to the teacher:**

1. Galatian Gentiles had never been "under the law," but they wanted to be because they had been persuaded that the Law of Moses [joined with the gospel] was the route to justification. They supposed that the Law should be their spiritual "teacher."
2. There were, indeed, lessons that they could learn from the Law and its history. One of the most important involved Abraham and his relationship with two women, one free and one in bondage. Each presented him with a son.
3. Ishmael, his firstborn, was born out of a human plan to provide an heir for the patriarch. [See Genesis 16:1-4.] Isaac, on the other hand, was the child of a divine plan to give Abraham a son. [See Genesis 21:1-3.]
4. The *symbolism* of Abraham's family relationships was significant for the Galatians as they sought to learn from the Law. Hagar, the bondswoman, represented the *physical* covenant [Law of Moses] given from Mt. Sinai. Its focus was on *physical* rituals and

exercises centered in the Jerusalem temple worship. Sarah, a freewoman, symbolized the new spiritual covenant [gospel] and is centered in the new Jerusalem [heaven--Rev. 2:10] and the *spiritual* activities of serving God in *spirit* and *truth* (John 4:24). Hagar's slavery brought slavery to her children. Sarah's freedom was passed to Isaac.

5. Those Galatians who joined themselves to the old covenant [Law of Moses] could expect nothing better than the bondage which that covenant had always imposed on its followers. Those who made the better choice of the new covenant [gospel] would enjoy the same freedom into which Isaac had been born. It [the new covenant] was the "mother" of all those who were faithful to Christ and the gospel.
6. Paul applies Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. 54:1) to the superior status of the gospel over the Law. Those who regarded the gospel as "desolate" ignored the fact that it actually had "many more [true] children" of Abraham [and of God] than the Law [which had none].
7. The problems that had been raised by the Judaizers among the Galatians should not be unexpected. As Ishmael had "persecuted" Isaac ["scoffed" at-- Gen. 21:9], advocates of the Law were now engaged in abusing disciples who were seeking justification through gospel obedience.
8. How did the Lord feel about the bad behavior of the Judaizers? Exactly as He had felt about the behavior of Ishmael toward Isaac in Abraham's time (Gen. 21:10-12). "Cast out the bondwoman [Law] and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall *not* be heir with the son of the freewoman [gospel]."
9. Paul's argument could not have been clearer. God demands that truth-seekers get rid of false teachers and their evil influences. He insists that salvation will be centered in the freedom of the new covenant and not in the old.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the same as a \_\_\_\_\_ while under \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ until the \_\_\_\_\_ appointed by the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ God sent His \_\_\_\_\_ to be born of a \_\_\_\_\_ under the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Christ came to \_\_\_\_\_ people under the \_\_\_\_\_ and give them the \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Christians were no more \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of God through \_\_\_\_\_.
5. After \_\_\_\_\_ God and being \_\_\_\_\_ by God, the Galatians were turning again to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ elements of the Law.
6. They wanted to observe \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Paul at first was received as an \_\_\_\_\_ or as \_\_\_\_\_, despite the \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Paul had become the Galatians' \_\_\_\_\_ because he told them the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Those who wanted to be under the \_\_\_\_\_ should \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Two \_\_\_\_\_ represented two \_\_\_\_\_, one producing \_\_\_\_\_ children and the other \_\_\_\_\_ children.
11. "Now we, brethren, as \_\_\_\_\_ was, are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_."
12. As Ishmael had \_\_\_\_\_ Isaac, advocates of the \_\_\_\_\_ could be expected to \_\_\_\_\_ those "born of the Spirit."
13. The \_\_\_\_\_ and her \_\_\_\_\_ should be \_\_\_\_\_, for her \_\_\_\_\_ cannot be \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.
14. "So then, brethren, we are not \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ but of the \_\_\_\_\_."

CHAPTER FOUR included the “great” argument that Paul employed to convince those who “desired to be under the law” how contrary to factual history their aspirations really were. The allegory of Abraham and the two women who bore him sons should have been sufficient to convince thoughtful disciples that God’s will was that men abandon the Law of Moses and embrace the gospel of Christ. “Cast out the bondwoman [Mosaic covenant] and her son [advocates for the Law], for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son [advocates for the gospel] of the freewoman [new covenant of Christ].”

Chapter Five

Verses 1-6-- Our liberty and our law:

1. Many suppose that “liberty” and “law” are exclusive of each other. But in our nation we understand how we must have law within the practice of liberty.
2. There are *two kinds* of law:
  - a. *External*-- imposed from without and demands obedience regardless of attitudes; driven by fear of punishment; the Law of Moses was of this type.
  - b. *Internal*-- generated from within the heart (2Cor. 3:3); driven by love for the law-giver [“want to,” not “have to”]; the gospel of Christ seeks commitment prior to obedience; it is a “perfect” law of liberty (James 1:25).
3. We “stand fast” in Christ’s liberty by respecting His “law” of liberty.
4. There are *two kinds* of yokes [devices that *join* things together] that men can bear:
  - a. A yoke of bondage which restricts freedom. The Law of Moses entangled [*enecho*-- “to be held within, to be ensnared”] its subjects in restrictions they were unable to cope with because of their own imperfections (Gal. 3:10). It could not free [forgive] men from sin but rather kept men forever shackled to their transgressions;
  - b. A yoke of freedom which allows meaningful work to be done freely. Christ’s law [“yoke”--Matt. 11:29] provides “rest” by removing from us the unmanageable burdens of sin and equipping us to manage the work that constitutes our service to God.
5. Christ’s sacrifice which freed them from Moses’ Law would be meaningless for them if they “became” *by choice* to be circumcised. Circumcision served as a pledge to keep Jehovah’ law (Gen. 17: 10,11). When incorporated into the rituals of Moses’ Law, it bound men in loyalty to that Law. Ironically, it was a promise to do what no man could do (Acts 15:10)!
6. Almost certainly, the Galatian Christians remained unimpressed with the Law’s demand for total compliance without making any provision for violations. Perhaps they would have been less attracted to the Law if they had understood its demands.

7. Gentiles had been “strangers [estranged] from the *covenants of promise*” before they were made “near” by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:12,13). Now, these Galatians had put themselves in a much more precarious situation. They had become estranged from Christ in their efforts to be justified by the Law. Whatever *grace* [favor] came from a connection to the Law of Moses, it was nothing when compared to the *grace* which comes through faith to save men’s souls (Eph. 2:8). What a bad exchange they had made!
8. These people *had* fallen from grace and serve as a definitive answer to the question: “Can a child of God so sin as to be lost?” They had been faithful Christians (verse 7), but what they had done was *sinful*, and it resulted in their *falling away from saving grace*!
9. Those who retain their faith that Christ will save men without their depending on law can trust the Spirit’s promise in the gospel that righteousness such as Abraham enjoyed comes by faith and not by law.
10. The requirements of law are totally irrelevant to the new covenant between God and men. Physical circumcision [or the lack of it] has nothing to do with being justified in the eyes of God.
11. It is faith in Jesus and an obedient [working] respect for His law that pleases God now (James 2:24). Faith without the works of God’s law is dead. James 2:26.

Verses 7-15-- Liberty, not license:

1. Paul equates “running well” with “obeying the truth.” He most likely *knew* who was guilty of hindering the Galatians in the “race that was set before them” (Heb. 12:1), but he wanted *them* to know that anything that had persuaded them to abandon the gospel had not come from anyone who had any respect for Christ.
2. The same warning about the influence of “leaven” was given to the Corinthians (1Cor. 5:6). Perhaps many of the Galatians had not yet surrendered their faith in Jesus to the error of the Judaizers. If not, the danger to them was great if they weren’t very diligent. They too could be deceived and overcome by the malicious attacks that were being made on the gospel and on the divine authority of Paul and others who had taught them that gospel.
3. Paul retained an optimistic confidence that some or many of them were not too “far gone” into error that their minds might yet be rescued from the spiritual peril that threatened the very existence of these churches of Galatia. For that to happen, however, the Judaizers must be exposed and judgment [condemnation] must be openly expressed against them.
4. Charges apparently had been made against Paul that he sometimes was inconsistent in his opposition to circumcision and the Law. True, he sometimes allowed Jewish saints to be circumcised under special circumstances [e.g., Timothy-- Acts 16:3], and he was known to have shown respect for certain rituals of the Law [e.g., vows-- Acts

21:20-26]. However, any claim that he took the *same* position about the Law and the gospel that the Judaizers took was patently *false*, and they knew it was false! If their claims were so, he would be praised, not persecuted, by his adversaries. They would find no offense in his message of the cross if it were presented within the context of keeping the Law of Moses.

5. Paul wished for the sake of the churches that they would see fit not only to expose the Judaizers but also to cut them off as false teachers from all fellowship (2Thes. 3:14). He hoped their behavior would soon become intolerable to faithful brethren and the offenders would bring upon themselves some healthful action by the churches.
6. “License” is the “abuse of liberty.” The Galatians Christians were “free” from the Law, but they were not free to abuse their liberty when it came to their treatment of others. It appears that bad feelings had been raised between the two “sides” of the controversy about the Law and the gospel. The extent and severity of the misconduct is unknown, but Paul launches into a needed lesson: “*Liberty* not exercised within the context of *love* is really not *liberty* at all, but *license*.”
7. Perhaps the harshest feelings were on the part of those who favored the Judaizers. One could not advocate the Law and ignore one of the main concepts of the Law, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18). It is possible that raising confusion and dissension had been the goal of the Judaizers all along.
8. Brethren who were warring with one another, regardless of which “side” they had taken, would soon find their initial good motives replaced by evil ones. In their zeal for “doing the right thing,” *spirituality* had been rooted out by *fleshly lust*! Their license in ill-treating fellow Christians had made their liberty a moot point.

#### Verses 16-23-- Walking in the liberty of the Spirit:

1. Christian *liberty* will control *license*. Faithful saints will “walk in the Spirit” [or spirit] and suppress their “natural” inclinations to bow to the lust of the flesh.
2. Paul documented the ongoing struggle that exists in every individual between the spirit and the flesh (Romans 7:14-20). It must be the aim of each disciple to make sure that the spirit wins the contest! The things our consciences “wish” us to do because we believe them to be *right* are often defeated by the things our lusts “want” us to do because they are *pleasurable*.
3. The Law of Moses and the law of Christ are different in more than in their positions on ceremonies and observances. The gospel advocates a lifestyle sensitive to the well-being of others, and those who truly appreciate the worthiness of their fellows will testify to the desirability of its code of conduct. For example, Jesus outlined this *better way* to live in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:21-43) when He commented on the Law *as interpreted by the Judaizers*:
  - a. As to anger toward others: The Law forbade *murder*; the gospel forbids *ill feelings*;

- b. As to moral behavior: The Law forbade *adultery*; the gospel forbids *lust*;
  - c. As to marital loyalty: The Law forbade *divorce without cause*; the gospel forbids *divorce except for adultery*;
  - d. As to speaking truth: The Law permitted *oaths*; the gospel forbids *swearing*;
  - e. As to justice: The Law allowed *revenge*; the gospel requires *forgiveness*;
  - f. As to love: The Law promoted love for *friends*; the gospel expects love for *enemies*.
4. Some human behavior is obviously governed by the flesh, not the Spirit, and must be avoided by *all* who would seek justification by faith in Jesus Christ. These practices may be grouped into four categories: (1) sins of *immorality*; (2) sins of *excess*; (3) sins of *paganism*; (4) sins of *bad attitudes*:
- a. Sins of immorality:
    - (1) Adultery and Fornication. These practices were rampant in Paul's day as they are in our own. Family values were destroyed by these lustful pursuits;
    - (2) Uncleanness is "gutter behavior." It is displayed in conversation and in actions that dwell on personal matters that should be kept private;
    - (3) Licentiousness [*aselgeia*-- "the absence of restraint, indecency"] dictates that "anything goes," even between men and women. It includes vulgar talk and sexual harassment.
  - b. Sins of excess:
    - (1) Drunkenness [*methuo*-- "habitual intoxication"]. This sin has caused grief to the human family since the times of Noah (Gen. 9:20-27) and Lot (Gen. 19:30-38). Even moderate drinking exposes one to the perils of drunkenness and to the loss of a godly influence;
    - (2) Revelries [*komos*-- behavior "concomitant and consequent to drunkenness"]. Shameful behavior may range from lampshades on heads at parties to the lewd exposure of the body in such activities as rock concerts and Mardi Gras events.
  - c. Sins of paganism:
    - (1) Idolatry [*eidoloatria*-- "the sin of the mind against God"]. Commenting on Gal. 4:8,9, W.E. Vine says, "An idolator is a slave to the depraved ideas his idols represent." One's idols are all things that take precedence to God in our minds and lives [e.g., family, job, wealth, fame, etc. [See Col.3:5.];
    - (2) Sorcery [*pharmakia*-- "the use of medicine, drugs, spells; poisoning"]. Vine says, "In sorcery, the use of drugs...was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the provision of various charms, amulets, etc., professedly designed to keep the applicant or patient from the attention and power of demons, but actually to impress the applicant with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer." Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8) possibly held the Samaritans under his influence by means of the practices thus described.
  - d. Sins of bad attitudes:
    - (1) Hatred [*echthra*-- "enmity; it is the opposite of *agapa*, love"]. Hatred is allowed

- against things but not against people [e.g., Jude 23]. Hatred is at the root of many other sins (1John 3:15);
- (2) Contentions [*eris*-- “the expression of enmity; strife, esp. rivalry”]. This sin violates the concept of the *one body*;
  - (3) Jealousies [*parazelo*-- “to desire eagerly to ‘be beside’ another”]. In another place, the apostle urged Christians, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself” (Phil. 2:3);
  - (4) Outburst of wrath [*thumos*-- “anger, passion; a more agitated condition of the feelings than *orge* (“wrath”), an outburst of wrath from inward indignation”]. Christians must guard against “losing their tempers,” for when the temper is lost, no one feels enriched who “finds” it;
  - (5) Selfish ambitions [*eriphia*-- “the desire to put one’s self forward; a partisan and factious spirit”]. Ambition can be a healthy emotion when properly channeled. *Selfish* ambitions can prove divisive among God’s people;
  - (6) Dissensions [“divisions”--ASV]. The church at Corinth was plagued with divisions that brought Paul’s condemnation (1Cor. 1:10). Unfounded disturbances in a local church are serious offenses against Christ’s desire for unity among all His disciples (John 17:21);
  - (7) Heresies [*hairesis*-- “a choosing; a self-willed opinion which leads to division”]. “Hobbies,” even of well-meaning persons, can prove extremely hurtful to the cause of Christ. Opinions must be sacrificed when peace is involved (Ro.14:19);
  - (8) Envy [*phthonos*-- “the desire to deprive another of what he has, rather than to have the same as another (jealousy)”]. It can be an easy and natural step from a mental attitude to expressing envy in a physical action;
  - (9) Murders [ommitted in some versions]. This sin/crime could well be the culmination and expression of the accumulation of the other *sins of the mind*. It would seem to be *unthinkable* among church members, but the lust of the flesh is so strong an adversary that *nothing* is beyond its strength to accomplish in us;
  - (10) And the like. Satan’s arsenal is overflowing with weapons that can surely destroy us spiritually and physically. Each person has his own list of hurtful things to which he is especially vulnerable. “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Cor. 10:12)!
5. It made no difference that some were still firm against combining the Law with the true gospel. If they were involved in any of the forbidden practices cited before, the virtue of doctrinal soundness would not cause the Lord to ignore their guilt of personal unsoundness. They simply would not inherit the kingdom of God!
  6. On the other hand, positive virtues would characterize those who walked [lived] by the leading of the Spirit through the word of truth. They would bear distinct “fruit” for all to see.
  7. “Fruit” [of the Spirit] is singular, while “works” [of the flesh] is plural. Perhaps the

idea is that while each forbidden activity is of itself capable of keeping men out of God's eternal kingdom, the desirable behaviors that enhance entrance cannot exist in isolation from one another. The Christian must simultaneously possess every virtue listed if he is to enjoy the Lord's pleasure. [See 2Peter 1:5f.]

8. The "fruit of the Spirit" includes these positive traits as defined by Vine:
  - a. Love ["a pervasive desire to do good to all other men"]. This is the most basic quality of the Christian heart. From it every other virtue springs;
  - b. Joy [*chara*-- "gladness"]. "Rejoice in the Lord always..." (Phil. 4:4). Christians have innumerable blessings for which to be glad, but the most precious is, "rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20);
  - c. Peace [*eirene*-- "the sense of rest and contentment consequent to harmonized relationships between God and man"]. The word occurs in every N.T. book except 1John, which reflects its importance to the kingdom of God. Christ gives a peace to the soul which the world cannot provide, so, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Attention to cultivating of the "fruit of the Spirit" will result in peace with God, peace with our fellows, and peace with self;
  - d. Longsuffering [*makrothumia*-- "forbearance, patience;" *makros*-- "long," *thumos*-- "temper"]. The "Golden Rule" surely applies in all our dealings with others. "In your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:19). Patience with the Lord is essential in overcoming trials. "He has made everything beautiful in its time..." (Eccl. 3:11);
  - e. Kindness and Goodness [*chrestotes/agathosune*-- "a kindly disposition toward others/a kindly activity on their behalf; the latter may also include sterner qualities by which 'doing good' to others is not necessarily by gentle means"]. Joseph of Arimathea is described as a "good man" (Luke 23:50), as also is Barnabas (Acts 11:24). This quality is related to being a "lover of what is good" or "lover of good men" [KJV] (Titus 1:8);
  - f. Faithfulness [*pistos*-- "faith; the quality of being faithful, to be trusted, reliable"]. Dependability is a virtue always to be cherished. Faithfulness to God, to the church, to a spouse, to a family, and to every obligation is crucial to salvation;
  - g. Gentleness [*praotas*-- "mildness, meekness" (KJV; ASV)]. Gentleness is closely associated with humility, i.e., submissiveness to God and man. Both Moses (Num. 12:3) and Jesus (Matt. 11:29) are described as being meek. Someone has called gentleness/meekness the "fruit of power";
  - h. Self-control [*egkrateia*-- "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites"]. The spirit must always be in control of the actions of the flesh (verse 17). Rash statements and rash behavior often prove the undoing of people whose *intentions* are better than their *actions*.
9. There is no law that censures the practices labeled as "fruit of the Spirit." Rather, they are all freely approved by the laws of God, man, and personal conscience.

**Verses 24-26-- Putting theory into practice:**

- 1. The religion of Christ touches men's lives not by theory, but by practice. It is not enough that we understand the importance of the principles of "walking by the Spirit." We who wish to be Christ's must *apply* those concepts to our contacts with others. Those "works of the flesh" which would hinder our walk with the Lord must be crucified ["put off"-- Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:8)] just as Jesus was crucified that all such sins might be forgiven.**
- 2. It is not reasonable to suppose that one can "live" [have spiritual life] in [through the guidance of] the Spirit and not be attentive to His directions to us in the word of God.**
- 3. Conceit, provocation, and envy all belong to a life alien to the harmony and peace that should characterize the body of Christ in this world. Sound doctrine must exist side by side with sound moral practice in every child of God. Paul's desire was that those Galatian Christians loyal to the true gospel would "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" in the way they lived in the presence of those who had become disloyal (Titus 2:10). That would surely go far in helping to persuade the erring, if anything could, to come back into the fold.**

1. Christ has made men \_\_\_\_\_ and they must not be \_\_\_\_\_ again with a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Every man who is \_\_\_\_\_ is a \_\_\_\_\_ to keep the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Those who \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ by the law become \_\_\_\_\_ from Christ and have \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_ avails with God but \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. “You \_\_\_\_\_ well. Who \_\_\_\_\_ you from \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.”
6. A little \_\_\_\_\_ leavens the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. If Paul preached \_\_\_\_\_, he would not be \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ would cease.
8. You have been called to \_\_\_\_\_; don’t use \_\_\_\_\_ as an \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Those who walk in the \_\_\_\_\_ will not \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. If we \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ one another, we may be \_\_\_\_\_ by one another!
11. How many “works of the flesh” are listed by Paul? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How many qualities make up the “fruit of the Spirit”? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Against this “fruit of the Spirit” there is no \_\_\_\_\_.
14. If we \_\_\_\_\_ in the Spirit, let us \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Those who are \_\_\_\_\_ have \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ with its \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

IN CHAPTER FIVE, Paul concluded his arguments against the doctrine of compromise being taught by the Judaizers. He warned defectors from the gospel that they had “fallen from grace,” and to those still faithful to the truth he expressed confidence that they would not be turned away into error. He reminded them that love must govern their dealings with those who had fallen away. They must always “walk in the Spirit” and display upright behavior that would enhance their doctrinal position. In this chapter, he will give his closing instructions about proper conduct toward brethren who have been “bewitched” by teachers who wanted to “glory in their flesh.” His message can be summarized by the words, “Bear and Beware,” “Share,” “Compare,” and “Forbear.”

Verses 1-5-- ***“BEAR AND BEWARE”***--

1. “A man” is any one of God’s children who may be tempted and fall into sin. We are urged to “walk in the Spirit” (5:25), but we are also warned, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Cor.10:12).
2. This “man” is to be “restored,” not “converted.” He may be among those Paul admonished, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law; you *have fallen from grace*” (5:4). It was to God’s grace, by which he had been saved and by which he could be saved again (Eph. 2:8), that he needed to be restored.
3. Many of the Galatians had been “bewitched” (3:1) by false teachers. Their fall likely had not been the result of their deliberate investigation into the merits of the Judaizers’ doctrine. Instead, they had been “overtaken” [“surprised”] without considering the consequences of their actions. Vine says the meaning “is not that of detecting a person in the act, but of his being caught by the trespass, through his being off guard.”
4. A person thus entangled in sin might be more easily disentangled than one who more deliberately had chosen the sin. Perhaps faithful members could rescue souls that otherwise would be lost forever if they just stood by and did nothing in their behalf.
5. Paul prescribed a *compassionate action* and an *effective process* to follow:
  - a. Who is involved? “You who are *spiritual*.” It seldom does much good when the “pot calls the kettle ‘black’”;
  - b. What must they do? “Restore such a one.” There is a sense of urgency in this exhortation because of the status of a lost brother: “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning” (2Pet. 2:20);
  - c. How do they proceed? “In a spirit of gentleness.” Gentleness and self-control are inherent in the fruit of the Spirit in which the “spiritual” always walk (Gal. 5:23). Love for a lost brother will preclude harsh attitudes and harsh treatment;
  - d. Why is this process important? “Considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

The Golden Rule applies here as elsewhere (Matt. 7:12). BEWARE-- it is very possible that one day the “the shoe is on the other foot” and the restorer may need to be restored. Also, the *temptation* to act in an arrogant and rigid manner can lead the “spiritual” brother into his own sins of *conceit* and *provocation* (Gal. 5:26).

6. There are burdens we may BEAR and others we may not. The burden of spiritual weakness is not only one of the hardest burdens for the sinner to *bear* but also one of the hardest for another to *share* with him. Unlimited patience and sensitivity are often necessary to help lift a backslider out of the sin-pit into which he has plunged.
7. Attempts at restoration must be rooted not only in a sense of *duty* but also in a *love* for the lost. They must come from “want to” and not just “have to.” Our love should be demonstrated, not just stated. The law of Christ is, “Love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:39).
8. The Judaizers evidently had been effective in convincing some that people showed superior intellect and spirituality when they were willing to mix the gospel with the Law of Moses. But BEWARE-- such defectors who consider themselves as “something” are judged by the Lord to be “nothing.” Leaving the simple truth to embrace even the most sophisticated error demonstrates gross *ignorance*, not intellect!
9. BEWARE-- every Galatian Christian bore personal responsibility for his treatment of the pure gospel. Those who had fallen away would suffer the consequences of a personal judgment. Those who yet remained faithful must continue to be vigilant lest they should be overtaken in other kinds of forbidden behavior [e.g., Gal. 5:19-21, 26]. Our confidence rests in the quality of our *own* loyalty to Christ and not in a comparison that we might make with the flawed loyalty of others.

Verses 6-10-- “SHARE”--

1. It appears that there existed among some of the Galatian churches a problem about the financial support of gospel teachers. Just what the problem was, we don’t know, but the apostle thought to deal with it before he closed this letter to the Galatians.
2. His instructions about SHARING their *material possessions* with those who had SHARED the *gospel* with them was consistent with his teaching in other places and in other contexts. His extended lesson to the Corinthian church about this matter was driven home with the statement, “Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” (1Cor. 9:14).
3. We can’t be sure about any financial relationship that might have occurred between Paul and the Galatian churches, but it is highly possible that he had received support from some or all of them when he first went among them preaching the gospel. It is also possible that they had assisted him while he labored in other places. The church at Philippi had done that repeatedly (Phil. 4:15,16).

4. Paul perhaps showed concern about the support of preachers because of a change of attitude toward him by some of the Galatian members (Gal. 4:14-16). Had they cut off assistance to him? Had they informed him that they would not again help him in his need? Or, was Paul just concerned that help for other gospel preachers working with the churches of Galatia would be withheld?
5. It was self-deceptive to believe that God would continue to give spiritual blessings to selfish and deluded Christians while they refused to give material blessings to His messengers of salvation.
6. We always “reap what we sow.” Saints must choose where they want to go-- to spiritual corruption and damnation or to everlasting life? Of course, many factors affect where our destination lies, but liberality toward the Lord’s cause is certainly among the things that make a difference.
7. Not only do we bear a duty to SHARE with those who carry God’s word to the lost but also as Christian individuals who “walk in the Spirit,” we are obligated to SHARE with *all* men [in need] and *especially* with other saints [“household of faith”-- 1Tim. 3:15] who may be in distress.

Verses 11-15-- “COMPARE”--

1. Paul was never interested in making a physical impression on other men (Gal. 1:10). However, he was not reluctant to cite his own physical credentials and to use them to expose the fraudulent practices of false teachers when the interests of the gospel were involved. [See 2Corinthians 11:16-33.]
2. It might open the eyes of some “bewitched” Galatians to consider and COMPARE Paul’s motivations and actions with those of the Judaizers who had deceived them so shamefully.
3. The Judaizers were not nearly as dedicated to the Law of Moses and to the rite of circumcision as they tried to appear. Personal reputation and popularity really were much more important to them. They wanted more than anything to “make a good showing in the flesh” [of the Galatians] by circumcising them. J. W. McGarvey and Philip Pendleton comment:
 

They did this for no zeal for circumcision, but in order to escape the persecution of their Jewish brethren for adherence to the doctrine of the cross. Moreover, these Judaizers who were thus urging circumcision did not do so from any zeal for the law, for they were making no effort themselves to keep it, but they did it that they might boast to other strict and unconverted Jews how they were making Jews out of Gentile Christians. Thus their motives were not religious and holy, but base and selfish.
4. Paul’s motivation was just as transparent as theirs. Close observers could see that he was just as interested in *them* [the Galatian Christians] as the Judaizers were in *themselves!* COMPARE-- Paul’s glorying was in how the cross of Jesus can change men’s *spirits* from unrighteous to righteous. Theirs was in how circumcision could change men’s *flesh* from “Gentile” to “Jewish.” Which was more important?

5. It was the “cutting off” of man’s *heart* from the world that mattered to God, not a “cutting off” of his flesh. It was no longer circumcision that served as a sign to the world that certain people were the people of Jehovah. Now, that sign was seen in the spirits of people who maintained an unwavering faith in the power of Christ to save on His *own* merits and not on any advantages found in the Law.
6. God no longer had any interest in circumcision or in uncircumcision. What caught His attention was that a man had become a “new creature” through faith in Jesus and obedience to His commands (Gal. 3:26-28).
7. COMPARE the sincerity of Paul with the insincerity of the Judaizers:
 

<u>PAUL</u>	<u>JUDAIZERS</u>
(a) <u>Do</u> good to all men-- vs. 10	(a) <u>Look</u> good to all men-- vs. 12
(b) Willing to be persecuted-- vs. 17	(b) Unwilling to suffer-- vs. 12
(c) Obedience to all commands-- vs. 4	(c) Pick and choose commands-- vs. 13
(d) “New creatures” important-- vs. 15	(d) “Enrollees” important-- vs. 13
(e) Glory only in cross [spirit]-- vs. 14	(e) Glory in fleshly criteria-- vs. 13
8. “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit” (Matthew 12:33).

Verses 16-18-- “FORBEAR” [“*refrain from doing*”-- Webster]

1. It was vital for all saints, Jews and Gentiles, to walk [live] according to “this rule,” meaning that everyone must concede once and for all that things of the flesh no longer matter to the Lord.
2. The “Israel of God” no longer consists of fleshly Jews as had been true under the Law of Moses. “For they are not all Israel who are *of* Israel” (Romans 9:6). “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call on Him. For *whoever* calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:12,13).
3. Since both believing Jews and believing Gentiles now comprise the “Israel of God,” both nations may confidently expect to receive the peace and mercy of Jehovah as a precious reward for their loyalty to the true gospel of Jesus Christ. So, FORBEAR making differences where God makes none, or His blessings will be withheld from you.
4. Paul now had said all that needed to be said to convince honest men that the Judaizers had “bewitched” the unwary and had led them into serious spiritual trouble. Every false argument for the Law had been exploded by the truth; every false motive of those who argued for the Law had been exposed in its ugliness.
5. “So,” concludes Paul, “you who have resorted to tactics unbecoming to Christians in trying to tear down the influence of ‘my’ gospel and my apostolic authority, FORBEAR any further efforts to do me harm. The physical scars I have accumulated over many years of service to my Lord speak more loudly than anything you can say. The pit you have *already* dug for yourselves is deep enough. Stop digging!!”

1. Those \_\_\_\_\_ in a \_\_\_\_\_ should be \_\_\_\_\_ in a spirit of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When we \_\_\_\_\_ one another's \_\_\_\_\_, we \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Each person must \_\_\_\_\_ his own \_\_\_\_\_ and have \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ alone, and not in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Those who are \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ should \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If we \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_, we will reap \_\_\_\_\_; if we \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_, we will reap \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Do not grow \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_, for in \_\_\_\_\_ we will \_\_\_\_\_ if we do not lose \_\_\_\_\_.
7. As we have \_\_\_\_\_, we should do \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ but especially to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The Judaizers sought to make a \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ and were not willing to \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ's \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Those who were \_\_\_\_\_ did not keep the \_\_\_\_\_, but they wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Galatians.
10. Paul had been \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ had been \_\_\_\_\_ to him.
11. "For in \_\_\_\_\_ neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_ avails anything, but a \_\_\_\_\_."
12. None should \_\_\_\_\_ Paul about his apostolic credentials because he \_\_\_\_\_ in his \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

ADDENDUM 2-- CHART-- “*THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL*”

THE LAW

1. A perverted gospel (1:7)
2. Of human origin (1:11)
3. Traditions of men (1:14)
4. Brings bondage (2:4)
5. Divisive (2:12)
6. A curse of death (3:10)
7. Justification by *perfect* works (3:12)
8. Inherit by the flesh (3:18,21)
9. Only a tutor (3:24)
10. Addressed to servants (4:7)
11. Persecutes the heirs (4:29)
12. Falling from grace (5:4)
13. Hinders running well (5:7)
14. Promotes “works of flesh” (5:19-21)

THE GOSPEL

1. A heavenly gospel (1:7)
2. Of divine origin (1:12)
3. Revelation of God (1:16)
4. Gives liberty (2:4)
5. Unifying (2:14)
6. A promise of life (3:14)
7. Justification by faith (3:11)
8. Inherit by the promise (3:18,22)
9. A real teacher (3:25)
10. Addressed to sons (4:17)
11. The heirs are persecuted (4:29)
12. Called into (unto) grace (1:6)
13. Assures running well (5:7)
14. Promotes “fruit of Spirit” (5:22,23)



# THE GOSPEL

*According to*

PAUL

STUDIES IN PAUL'S SHORTER LETTERS TO CHURCHES

*Ephesians*

“Christ and the Church”

WITH CLASS QUESTIONS FOR EACH LESSON

By:Reg Ginn



# **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL**

## **EPHESIANS**

### **“Christ and the Church”**

**“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22,23)**

**“...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10,11)**



MACEDONIA

Philippi Neapolis

Beroea Thessalonica

BLACK SEA

GALATIA

CAPPADOCIA

Troas Assos

Mitylene

ASIA

Antioch

CILICIA

ACHAIA

Athens

Ephesus

Iconium

Corinth

Miletus

Lystra

Tarsus

Chios

Samos

Phrygia

Colosse

Derbe

Cos

Patara

Antioch

SYRIA

CRETE

Rhodes

CYPRUS

DAMASCUS

ARABIA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Ptolemais

Tyre

Caesarea

Jerusalem

PALESTINE

## INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS

### *The Overview*

Ephesians is Paul's dissertation on the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. It explores the awesome "mystery" of God's eternal plan for the reconciliation of man to God and man to man. It presents the church as a unique institution and the principal entity *through which* Jehovah determined to make known to the world His profound wisdom and unbounded grace. It is also the institution *in which* He pleases to bestow upon humankind His greatest blessing of eternal salvation. The letter proclaims a welcome message of heavenly beneficence for men hopelessly entangled in the consequences of sin and gives a solemn challenge to those who accept God's offer of redemption to "walk worthy of the calling" with which they had been called. Perhaps nowhere else is the "mystery" by which God would provide "one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16) revealed more comprehensively or satisfactorily.

### *The City*

Ephesus was the capital city of the Roman province of Asia and was located near the northeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea at the mouth of the Cayster river. It was situated at the junction of important trade routes and was a key site on the main route between Rome and the eastern stretches of the vast empire. In 29 A.D. Ephesus was heavily damaged by a great earthquake, but it was rebuilt by the emperor Tiberius. In New Testament times, the city was "the metropolis of Asia" and possessed a splendor unsurpassed by any other city of the region. Stephens, the noted geographer, called it "Most Illustrious," and Pliny praised it as "the ornament of Asia."

A large number of Jews with Roman citizenship lived in Ephesus, and they maintained an active synagogue there (Acts 18:19; 19:8). The populace was largely devoted to the worship of the eastern goddess Diana [not the Diana of Greek mythology], a many-breasted "mother goddess," whose statue reputedly had fallen "directly from the heavens" into the possession and adoration of the citizens of Ephesus. The religious activities in the city were centered around Diana, and a great temple had been erected in her honor. Along with the "heaven-sent" statue, this magnificent structure was the city's leading attraction. The merchandizing of items related to temple-worship became the foundation of its economy.

After many years of prominence, Ephesus eventually fell into considerable deterioration after its harbor was filled with silt and became unusable. Today, only the remnants of some of the city wall and a gate, the stadium, a theater, Roman baths, and a library may be found. The site of Diana's temple was recently no more than a swamp [Albert Barnes].

## *The Temple*

The most notable structure in the ancient city of Ephesus was the magnificent temple erected for the worship of the pagan goddess Diana. The temple of New Testament times had replaced an earlier one burned in 356 B.C. by Herostratos, who confessed to the deed as nothing more than an attempt to be remembered forever on the pages of history. The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible describes the building which Paul saw:

The new structure was a magnificent work of Ionic architecture, 4 times as large as the Parthenon at Athens, and ranked as one of the 7 wonders of the world. It stood on a platform about 425 feet in length and 239 ½ feet in width, measured from the lowest step. A flight of 10 steps led to the pavement of the platform, and 3 more steps to the pavement of the temple. The temple itself was 342 ½ feet in length and 164 feet in width. It consisted of 2 rows of 8 columns each in front and rear, and 2 rows of 20 columns each on either side of the sanctuary. These with 2 columns at each entrance of the sanctuary made 100 in all. Each was a monolith of marble 55 feet in height, and the 18 at each end were sculptured. The roof was covered with large white marble tiles. The cella, or inner sanctuary, which these columns surrounded, was 70 feet wide and 105 long. Its internal ornamentation was of surpassing splendor, adorned with works of art by Phidias and Praxiteles, Scopas, Parrhasius, and Apelies. It was destroyed by the Goths about A.D. 260.

## *The Background*

Paul first came to Ephesus following extensive preaching in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16:10-18:17). His initial visit there was brief, and he departed with a promise to return to the city (18:21), leaving Priscilla and Aquila behind. Luke records work done by the couple in teaching Apollos “the way of God more accurately” (18:26).

As promised, Paul returned to Ephesus and continued his teaching there for more than two years. One of his first efforts involved an encounter with twelve disciples who had only a limited understanding of the gospel (19:1f.). When he was denied the use of the Jewish synagogue, the apostle resorted to the school of Tyrannus, where he taught for two years and from where he was successful in spreading the truth throughout all Asia (19:9,10). The influence of the gospel was such that many confessed their deeds and even the magicians burned their books of magic (19:18,19).

Paul’s work was interrupted by an uproar instigated by Demetrius, a silversmith and leader of the craftsmen of Ephesus who made their living by selling items related to Diana’s worship. The uprising was suppressed by the city clerk, and Paul was able to leave Ephesus without harm (19:23f.). After a three month stay in Greece, Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders at Miletus as he hastened to Jerusalem for Pentecost (20:16,17).

The apostle spent a total of three years in Ephesus, “serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials.” He could testify to the saints that he had “kept back nothing that was helpful,” and consequently he was “innocent of the blood of all men” (20:19ff).

### *The Epistle*

**The Author:** Paul identifies himself by name as the author of the letter. This is highly characteristic of the letters sent by the apostle to churches and individuals.

**The Recipients:** For many centuries it was accepted that the letter was sent, as the inscription in most versions indicates, to “the saints who are in Ephesus.” Some recent scholarship, however, has questioned this long-held view. It is noted that some of the older manuscripts displayed a blank spot instead of the word, “Ephesians,” and perhaps it was intended as a “circular letter” to be passed among several churches, with the name of each location being written in the blank where “Ephesians” normally appears today. Other critics claim that this letter is the one identified by Paul in Colossians as the “epistle from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16) and was never intended specifically for Christians in Ephesus at all. They cite the total absence of personal references that would be expected in a letter to people with whom the apostle had associated so intimately for so long a time. Paul’s seeming oblivion to any local circumstances at Ephesus and his references to their having [only] *read* of his knowledge of Christ (Eph. 3:2-4) and to his having [only] *heard* of their faith and love for all the saints (Eph. 1:15) also trouble these critics. Charles Hodge arrives at this conclusion about solving this controversy:

Perhaps the most probable solution of the problem is, that the epistle was written to the Ephesians and addressed to them, but being intended specially for the Gentile Christians as a class, rather than for the Ephesians as a church, it was designedly thrown into such a form as to suit all such Christians in the neighbouring churches, to whom no doubt the apostle wished it to be communicated. This would account for the absence of any reference to the peculiar circumstances of the saints in Ephesus.

**The Date of Writing:** Ephesians is one of four letters generally regarded as Paul’s “prison epistles,” sent by the apostle while he sat in a Roman prison awaiting trial at the hands of Caesar. Although controversy has arisen among scholars about whether the prison was situated in Rome or in Caesarea, the weight of evidence seems to favor the former location. That conclusion places the origin of Ephesians within the range of 60-61 A.D., shortly before he was tried and released to resume his apostolic mission.

### *The Themes*

As might be expected, different readers discern different themes in the Ephesian letter. One writer says, “Ephesians is an essay on the church, which is shown to be the fulfillment of the purpose of God conceived in eternity before time began.” Another suggests, “The

‘heavenly’ character of the believer’s calling is stressed in Ephesians...Although previously dead in sin, the Christians had been raised with Christ and seated with Him in the ‘heavenly places.’ This ‘heavenly’ calling, in turn, provides the means and the empowering of the believer’s life of obedience on earth.”

A third opinion is that “if one theme can be discerned, it is the grace of God which has produced a united church, Jew and Gentile, in one body.”

Hodge offers a good summary of various themes that may be found in the book:

The apostle addresses himself principally to Gentile Christians. His object was, 1. To bring them to a just appreciation of the plan of redemption, as a scheme devised from eternity by God, for the manifestation of the glory of his grace. 2. To make them sensible of the greatness of the blessing which they enjoyed in being partakers of its benefits. 3. To lead them to enter into the spirit of the gospel as a system which ignored the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and united all the members of the church in one living body destined to be brought into full conformity to the image of Christ. 4. To induce them to live as it became a religion which had delivered them from the degradation of their condition as heathen, and exalted them to the dignity of the sons of God.

*The Outline*

THE CHURCH: FULFILLING GOD’S ETERNAL PLAN

<u>Section</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Passage</u>
1	The church: God’s plan fulfilled	1:3-14
2	The church: God’s glorious inheritance	1:15-23
3	The church: God’s redeemed people	2:1-10
4	The church: God’s universal habitation	2:11-22
5	The church: God’s mystery revealed	3:1-13
6	The church: God’s glory manifested	3:14-21
7	The church: God’s functional family	4:1-16
8	The church: God’s transformed man	4:17-32
9	The church: God’s righteous walkers	5:1-14
10	The church: God’s submissive servants (1)	5:15-33
11	The church: God’s submissive servants (2)	6:1-9
12	The church: God’s secure saints	6:10-20

Note: Abbrev. for versions: KJV (King James); NKJV (New King James); ASV (American Standard); RSV (Revised Standard); Conf. (Confraternity).

Note: Students should have Bibles open to passages discussed and correlate text and discussion.

## EPHESIANS

### Chapter One

#### Verses 1,2-- OPENING STATEMENT

1. It was characteristic of Paul to identify himself as an apostle in his opening remarks. Only his epistles to the churches at Philippi and Thessalonica and to Philemon omit that fact. No doubt a reminder to his readers of his apostolic authority would lend added weight to what he had to say and encourage their close attention to his words.
2. In his letter to the Galatian churches, Paul had found it necessary to stress immediately that his apostleship was not “from men nor through man.” Of course, that was because his apostleship was being challenged by many in those churches. Some contended that what he taught only came from what he had learned from other teachers and was inferior to the teaching of the original twelve, especially Peter.
3. There seems to have been no such opposition to Paul’s authority at Ephesus, and he chose to use his “standard” opening in this letter.
4. This epistle was directed to the “saints” in Ephesus [See Introduction, page 4, “The Recipients”] and to those “faithful” in Christ Jesus. These were the *same* persons, but the dual descriptions of the addressees suggests that there were *two* reasons they were being sent this letter: (a) they were “saints” [set apart] because of what God had done for them through the divine plan which Paul would explain to them in this first chapter, and (b) they must be diligent about what they must do for themselves to be regarded as “faithful” and eligible to enjoy the special status of “saints.”
5. Correspondingly, the first three chapters of the Ephesian letter are devoted to an exposition of the scheme of heaven to save men [doctrinal], and the last three chapters deal with duties imposed on the saved by heaven to keep them saved [practical].

#### Verses 3-14-- THE CHURCH-- GOD’S PLAN FULFILLED [Section One]

1. This entire passage of twelve verses appears most accurately as *one* long sentence [e.g., ASV], although some versions divide it into several sentences in an attempt to enhance understanding.
2. Paul’s immediate goal is, (a) to generate in the hearts of the Ephesian brethren [Gentiles in particular] a deeper perception of how much God had really blessed them when He accepted them into a Father/child relationship in the church; (b) to elevate their appreciation for God’s beneficence to a higher level.
3. Christians should regard God as “blessed” [*eugelotes*-- adj., “praised”] because God has first “blessed” [*eulogeo*-- “bestowed blessings on”] them.

4. Our relationship with *our* heavenly Father is possible because God is also the Father of Jesus Christ and maintains a special kinship with Jesus and with us. These relationships have motivated Almighty God to utilize His Son in giving *every spiritual blessing* to all His other sons. We are blessed because of our special relationship with the Son of God.
5. There are five references to “*the heavenly [places]*” in this letter: 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. *Places* is interpolated into the various translations and does not appear in the manuscripts. There have been several meanings attached to the expression, but the most satisfactory seems to be, “heavenly *arrangement*,” “heavenly *system*,” or “heavenly *plan*.” It is clear that both good things (1:3; 1:20; 2:6) and bad (3:10; 6:12) are associated with “the heavenly [places].” Since the main focus of Ephesians is on the divine plan or arrangement made for God’s governance of the world and for the eternal salvation of His saints, it is reasonable to suppose that Paul would have wanted it known that *all things*, both good and bad, have been deliberately included in that plan. Nothing has been overlooked or left to chance, and that is why Christians can trust implicitly in the “exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe” (1:19).
6. In verses 4-14, Paul lays out the marvelous plan by which “all spiritual blessings” had become available to the Ephesians [and others]. The “steps” followed by the Lord in the formulation and execution of the plan are not all presented in their order of occurrence, but when placed in proper order they unlock the *mystery* of Jehovah’s mind and the awesomeness of His limitless power to accomplish His will.
7. The elements of the Lord’s scheme of redemption for sin-doomed men are cited:
  - a. God’s *good will* led Him [in eternity past] to *purpose* to save sinners (vs. 9);
  - b. God *chose* between the classes of *obedient* and *disobedient* persons (vs. 4);
    - (1) Those willing to become “holy and without blemish” were chosen.
  - c. God *predestined* [pre-planned] that the chosen would become His *sons* (vs. 5);
    - (1) This would be accomplished through the work of *Christ*.
  - d. God had made His *will* known by apostles and teachers (vs. 9a);
    - (1) The *mystery*-- Jews and Gentiles to be gathered together in one [body] (vs. 10).
  - e. God had made the chosen *accepted* in Christ (vs. 6);
    - (1) Redemption would come through Christ’s *blood* (vs. 7).
    - (2) Sins would be forgiven through His *grace* (vs. 7).
  - f. God had *bestowed* a rich inheritance on His church (vs. 11);
  - g. God is *glorified* by the trust of Jews and Gentiles in His wisdom (vs. 12,13a);
  - h. God *sealed* the saved as a *guarantee* of His inheritance (vs. 13b,14).
8. Three factors were the driving forces underlying the plan of redemption preached by the apostles and accepted by the Ephesian Christians: (a) God’s good pleasure toward a lost world (vs. 5,9); (b) God’s grace that offered forgiveness in spite of man’s past disobedience (vs. 6,7); (c) God’s will which designed and implemented every detail of His plan (vs. 5,9,11).

## 9. God's eternal plan expounded:

- a. He *chose* [*eklego*-- "to pick out, select"; in some versions-- "elected"] *us* (vs. 4) [to be] in [a special relationship with] Christ that the chosen might be *holy* [separated] and *without blame* [*amomos*-- "without blemish"].
- (1) These are the same words that describe the purity of the church (Eph. 5:27).
  - (2) The choice was made before the chosen existed. The foreknowledge of the Lord is comforting but incomprehensible to the human mind.
  - (3) Christians serve God *in love*-- He loves us and we in turn love Him (1Jn. 4:19).
  - (4) God chose a class to receive His blessings *in* Christ. Only "as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Voluntary obedience is the basis upon which God's choice is made;
- b. He *predestined* [*proorizo*-- "foreordained"] *us to be adopted* as His own sons and to enjoy the benefits of sonship (vs. 5). This occurred because His "only begotten" [natural, of the same nature] Son gave His life that alien people might escape from corruption and partake of the "divine nature" as God's adopted sons (John 3:16; 2Pet. 1:4);
- c. He *made us accepted* ["objects of grace"-- Berry's Greek N.T.] in Christ (vs. 6). Those who had been "far off" from Jehovah were "made near" by Christ's blood (Eph. 2:13). Two things had made this possible:
- (1) He *offered us redemption* [*apolutrosis*-- "a release for a ransom"] from the bondage of sin (vs. 7). The price of redemption [the ransom] is a "standing" offer made by Jesus "once for all" that may be utilized to secure the justification of every sinner throughout the gospel age (Hebrews 9:12).
  - (2) He *gave us forgiveness of sins* (vs. 7). This freedom from sins is realized when the sinner accepts the Savior's offer to redeem him out of sin's bondage and when God accepts the ever-available ransom price [Christ's blood] in exchange for the soul of the sinner. [Also, see Colossians 1:14.]
    - (a) Heaven's marvelous offer is made to unworthy humans because of God's *grace, wisdom* [*sophia*-- "insight into the true nature of things"], and *prudence* ["practical wisdom in the management of affairs"] (vs. 8). Only Jehovah possessed an understanding of *what* had to be done to save sinners, the practicality of *how* to accomplish it, and grace enough to *want* to do it.
    - (b) Note that Paul assures the elected ones of their election and he cites the nature of their blessings as the elect, but *nowhere* in this passage does he specify the conditions on which their blessings are dependent. That information will be forthcoming when he lists *seven* basic truths by which men are qualified for election to salvation. [See notes on Ephesians 4:4,5.]
- d. He *made known the mystery of His will* (vs. 9). His eternal purpose for the elect would have been to no avail without its publication to them. The "mystery" [some-

thing beyond understanding until revealed] was carried into all the world by the apostles and other inspired messengers (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16,20, etc.).

- (1) God's "mystery" was a plan to "gather together" in one body (vs. 10) *all things* [all powers in heaven and all saved people on earth-- both Jews and Gentiles] in a way that would enable Christ to be preeminent in *all things* regarding salvation (Col. 1:18).
  - (2) The mystery was kept secret until times were "full" [conducive to success] (vs.10). Conditions in the empire were then supportive of preaching the gospel;
- e. He *provided an inheritance* to be received by the elect (vs. 11). An immediate inheritance of spiritual blessings has been made available to them upon their obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:38b), but an even greater inheritance awaits the faithful upon the successful completion of their service to Christ on earth (1Peter 1:4).
- (1) Everything-- past, present and future-- that defines the relationship between Almighty God and His elect is possible because of the omnipotence of His will. "...but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26);
- f. He *sealed the elect* with the Holy Spirit (vs. 12,13). These verses address two groups of people, both of whom trusted in Christ before being sealed:
- (1) Those "sealed" [certified] in a *miraculous* manner: "We who first trusted in Christ" refers to the Jews. "You who also trusted" are the Gentiles. Both had been "sealed" by receiving the "pouring out" of the Holy Spirit, which *was a seal of approval or a certification* that a new covenant was being established between God and men. Initial certification of Jews came on Pentecost (Acts 2:17,21); validation was given to the Gentiles of Cornelius' family (Acts 10:44,47). The bestowal of nine different miraculous gifts to numerous members of the early church (1Cor. 12:7-11) was a continuing miraculous certification of the union between God and His people of all races.
  - (2) Those "sealed" [certified] in a *non-miraculous* manner: The "gift of the Holy Spirit" was given to all obedient people (Acts 2:38). This gift provided "times of refreshing" in the form of unspecified blessings (Acts 3:19). Some of these blessings are revealed elsewhere in Scripture:
    - (a) The Spirit intercedes for us in making our prayers effectual (Rom. 8:26,27);
    - (b) He leads us through the word to behave as sons of God (Rom. 8:14);
    - (c) He bears witness by the word that we are God's children (Rom. 8:16);
    - (d) He guides our "walk" to avoid destruction by the lust of the flesh (Gal.5:16);
    - (e) He enables us to be united with others in the Lord's family (Eph. 4:3-6);
    - (f) Innumerable acts of providential care that remain largely unknown to us.
- g. He *guaranteed our eternal salvation* by the "sealing" of the Spirit (vs. 14). The gift of the Holy Spirit to Christians is an "earnest" [ASV] of our ultimate redemption at the last judgment. In law, an "earnest" is "something of value given by a buyer to a seller, to bind the bargain" [Webster]. It might be said that Christians are a

“purchased possession in spiritual layaway” until the time of final accounting when the open books will be closed (Rev. 20:12) and God will take the faithful home with Him to heaven.

10. Every facet of God’s wonderful scheme of redemption should elicit “the praise of His glory” from His church. Paul reminds his readers of this *three* times (vs. 6, 12, 14).

Verses 15-23-- THE CHURCH-- GOD’S GLORIOUS INHERITANCE [Section Two]

1. It was gratifying to Paul to know that those for whom the Lord had done so much had in response displayed qualities that reflected their thankfulness. He had heard, and likely had personal knowledge, of their *faith* in Jesus and their *love* for their brethren who were also the objects of God’s grace.
2. Paul often prayed for his brethren and for their various needs in the Lord’s work. He also was not hesitant to ask his brethren to pray for him and for the things that would help him in spreading the truth of the gospel. Moreover, he insisted that all church members pray for one another. Prayer was a *very* important part of Paul’s daily life (1Thes. 5:17), as it had been in the life of Jesus while He was on earth [e.g., John 17].
3. There were several things needed by the Ephesians, and the apostle prayed for those things in their behalf:
  - a. *A spirit of wisdom and revelation about the gospel* (vs.17). Spiritual “wisdom” is “seeing things as God sees them.” That perspective can be grown in the Christian only through serious study of God’s revelation (1Cor. 2:11-13). But study must be approached with a deep respect for the holiness and authority of the revelation. That “spirit” is the foundation of all growth and usefulness in the kingdom;
  - b. *Enlightened understanding of the gospel* (vs.18). While some things in the gospel may be “hard to understand” (2Pet. 3:16), most things are easily understood by those whose hearts long for understanding (John 8:32). Among easy things are:
    - (1) The hope of His calling. We are “saved by hope” (Rom. 8:24) because the expectation of eternal salvation makes our sacrifices and our waiting worthwhile;
    - (2) The riches of His inheritance (vs. 18). “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). It is essential that we understand that our investment in a faithful and godly life is much more reasonable than any other we could make (Rom. 12:1);
    - (3) The greatness of His power to sustain us (vs. 19). *Nothing* can separate us from the love and care of our Lord so long as we choose to hold Him close (Rom. 8: 38,39). Discouragement and tribulation may attempt to defeat us in our quest for eternal life, but our Father’s power is more than sufficient to carry the day for us in resounding victory. “...for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day” (2Tim. 1:12);

- c. *Confidence in the efficacy of God's purpose* (vs. 20-23). "The Father of glory" (vs. 17) had left nothing to chance or to human wisdom when He formulated the great plan for man's redemption and eternal happiness. Every detail had been arranged in accord with *divine* wisdom and contrary to *human* wisdom:
- (1) God's "determinate counsel and foreknowledge" had willed that Jesus should die on the cross at the hands of wicked men (Acts 2:23). Human wisdom declared that a "dead" Christ could never become King of His kingdom (Matt. 16:21-23). Divine wisdom knew that the Father's power would raise Him from the dead, and the gates of Hades could not prevent His building His church [kingdom] (Matt. 16:18) (vs. 20a);
  - (2) The relationship between Father and Son could never be affected by the actions of humanity. Human wisdom supposed that the indignities and insults heaped upon Jesus both before and during the crucifixion would destroy any claim that had been made about His Sonship and Kingship (John 5:18; 19:21; Luke 23:32-37). But divine wisdom knew that Jesus' Kingship was spiritual and enduring (John 18:36,37) despite the efforts of His enemies to keep Him from His throne. The divine plan had established that Jesus would sit "in heavenly places" on that throne with full kingly authority now and throughout eternity (vs. 20b);
  - (3) Human wisdom concluded that the assertion of physical strength can dominate and destroy the unwanted influence of spirit-driven people. The combined forces of Rome and Jerusalem claimed a selfish victory over altruism when they nailed Jesus to the cross. Divine wisdom knew, however, that the war between good and evil was not over. The attraction of Christ's spiritual kingdom would far surpass anything earthly principalities and powers could offer. Worldly governments come and go; the kingdom of God with its King "shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44) (vs. 21);
  - (4) It seemed impossible to the human mind that Jews and Gentiles could ever live together in peace and harmony within any system or organization. The animosity on both sides was far too extensive. But Jehovah's wisdom was capable of planning and bringing into existence an organization [church] in which a perfect working harmony could flourish among members from all nations and backgrounds [His "fullness"] (Eph. 4:3-6; 1Cor. 1:10) (vs. 22,23). Unity among believers *was* assured when God put all the saved into one body with the one voice of Jesus to legislate its doctrine and practice in all things.
4. The church is God's glorious inheritance. It is the end-product of all that heaven has purposed for the salvation of lost mankind and which Paul has discussed so profoundly in these opening statements of the Ephesian letter. By it the manifold wisdom of the Lord is made known to principalities and powers in the heavenly places (3:10).

1. Christians have \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. We were \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ before the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world and are expected to be \_\_\_\_\_ and without \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We were also \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ as sons according to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Therefore, Christians are \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. We have \_\_\_\_\_ through Christ's \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of our \_\_\_\_\_.
6. God's \_\_\_\_\_ abounded in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ when He \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_ to us.
7. The Lord planned to \_\_\_\_\_ together in \_\_\_\_\_ all things \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Men \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ when they heard the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Those who \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Paul wanted the Ephesians to have a spirit of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
11. He also wanted them to know three things. What were they?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
12. "And He put \_\_\_\_\_ under His \_\_\_\_\_, and gave Him to be \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_, which is His \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Him who fills \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_."

Chapter Two

Verses 1-10-- THE CHURCH-- GOD'S REDEEMED PEOPLE [Section Three]

1. In chapter *one*, Paul rehearsed for the benefit of the Ephesians the marvelous steps that God had taken to make salvation possible for them. He had chosen, predestined, accepted, enriched, and sealed them in the course of executing His eternal plan. Paul spoke about things that had been done for Jews and Gentiles alike (1:12,13), and He emphasized the greatness of the heavenly wisdom and power that had made impossible things possible and that had established a church in which all men could serve God together in peace and good will.
2. In chapter *two*, the apostle's message becomes more narrowly focused on the personal situation of his readers. They are Gentiles to whom a relationship with the true God is still a new experience. Perhaps people who throughout their past had been "without God" need to be reminded about how blessed they are now to be "near by the blood of Christ."
3. To make his point, Paul employs the approach of "before" and "after." This contrast would impress the Ephesians with the magnitude of their opportunity to serve God under the gospel.
4. He specifies several facts about their spiritual condition prior to obedience.
  - a. They "walked according to the course of this world." They had a lifestyle typical of the way most people in the world lived. They likely were not notoriously wicked sinners but just did the same things day by day that "everybody else" did. Most of them probably had not been especially religious and had been oblivious to any need for change in their lives. Still, "...all have sinned..." (Rom. 3:23).
  - b. They lived "according to the prince of the power of the air." Satan is called "the prince [ruler] of the devils" (Mark 3:22); and "the prince [ruler] of this world" (John 12:31). He rules the hearts of worldly people through the "air" [atmosphere] of sin. Or, as the Jews supposed, through evil spirits that inhabit the air. Whichever it may be, His activity and influence are significant. Among other things:
    - (1) He was bold enough to tempt Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1f.);
    - (2) He "put it into the heart" of Judas to betray the Christ (John 13:2);
    - (3) He is a threat to the successful service of elders in the church (1Tim. 3:6,7);
    - (4) He persists in seeking to destroy the faithfulness of all saints (1Pet. 5:8).
  - c. They had formerly possessed the same spirit [*pneuma*-- "the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one;...affection, emotion, desire" (Vine)] that still controlled the behavior of the "sons of disobedience." This is the same usage of "spirit" as found in other passages:
    - (1) "You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear..." (Rom. 8:15);

- (2) “God has given them a spirit of stupor...” (Rom. 11:8);
- (3) “...not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord...”(Rom. 12:11);
- (4) “Shall I come to you with a...spirit of gentleness? (1Cor. 4:21).
- d. They conducted themselves in ways that satisfied their fleshly lusts, the desires of their bodies and their minds.
- (1) “Lust” [*epithumia*-- “strong desire”] can be a good thing:
- (a) Jesus had a “fervent desire” to eat the Passover (Luke 22:15);
- (b) Paul had a “desire” to depart and be with Christ (Phil. 1:23);
- (c) Paul wanted to see the Thessalonians with “great desire” (1Thes. 2:17).
- (2) “Lust” [*epithumia*] in other ways is a bad thing:
- (a) “You shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:16);
- (b) “They [false teachers] allure through the lusts of the flesh...” (2Pet. 2:18);
- (c) “The lust of the flesh...is not of the Father but is of the world” (1John 2:16).
- Note-- “Such ‘lusts’ are not necessarily base and immoral, they may be refined in character, but are evil if inconsistent with the will of God” (W. E. Vine).
- e. They had been “by nature” children of wrath. Their *lifestyle* had defined their *nature* [*physis*-- “the natural powers or constitution”]. Their “nature” was not inborn; they were not “totally depraved” because they had inherited the guilt of Adam’s sin. The guilt of sin originates in *personal* disobedience, not in the transgression of someone else. “The soul *who sins* shall die” (Ezek. 18:20). Neither is anyone born totally depraved. “But evil men and imposters will grow *worse* and *worse*, deceiving and being deceived” (2Tim. 3:13).
- f. “Others” [probably the Jews] were just as lost as Gentiles, because they were guilty of the same sinful behavior that condemns anyone who practices it.
5. Next, Paul proclaims the redemption of guilty men by the grace of God.
- a. “God so loved *the world*...” His mercy was not directed just to one segment of its population. The gospel was sent out to “all nations,” because the Lord’s grand plan (1:10) encompasses the salvation of “whosoever will” (Rev. 22:17).
- b. The Lord’s mercy was so *rich* it could not be denied to any who wanted salvation, but obviously not all who were “dead in trespasses” were “made alive with Christ.” That would have been universal salvation, because all men are sinners lost in their sins (Rom. 3:23). But the *opportunity* was given to all men, and some had chosen to *accept* Christ’s invitation to “come” (Matt. 11:28-30).
- c. Those who made the decision to follow Christ, although spiritually dead in sin, had pursued their decision to be rid of their sin by submitting to baptism. They were buried in water as Christ had been buried in the tomb. They were raised from the water of baptism into new spiritual life just as Jesus had been raised out of the earth (Rom. 6:3-5). Through the demonstration of their faith they were “raised up together” with Christ and with one another, Jews and Gentiles, to sit [now] in the

- “heavenly places” with the Lord. In the heavenly appointment of “places” in God’s eternal plan, Christ’s assigned place is at God’s right hand to reign over His kingdom [church] until the end of things (1Cor. 15:24,25). Our place is in His church [kingdom], into which we have been translated through our obedience (Col. 1:13). We “sit together” as we share in the unique relationship that exists between the body [church-- 1:22,23] and its Head and enjoy together its heavenly blessings.
- d. This extensive redemption from sin now shared by men of *all* nations will be in the ages to come [all time] an undeniable testimony of the limitless expanse of God’s grace and mercy, demonstrated by the unselfish gift of His Son (John 3:16).
  - e. The apostle shifts from “we” and “us” to “you” in verse 8. God’s grace toward any sinner was almost beyond comprehension, but His being willing to save men who had never before shown any inclination toward seeking His favor could hardly be imagined. But that is exactly what the Lord had done, and Gentile saints needed to be reminded of that. “By grace you have been saved.” They could do nothing to merit redemption from bondage, but God had given redemption to them when they believed in the validity of His offer and proved their faith in His power to save by complying with His requirements (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26,27, etc.).
  - f. It is salvation, not faith, that is “the gift of God.” Faith is something that man must generate for himself in his own heart. The popular doctrine of predetermination [on God’s part] and total passivity [on man’s part] is discriminatory and scripturally indefensible. Faith is man’s responsibility, not God’s (e.g., Acts 16:31).
  - g. *No person*, regardless of his national background or past religious experience, can offer any act [work] of his own devising that would obligate the Lord to save him from sin. The guilt is *too great* for him to erase it from his record. The Jews, with their ceremonial exercises under God’s own Law, could no more deserve to be saved than the Gentiles with their paganistic and ignorant devotions.
  - h. Let us be cautious about our understanding of the concept of “salvation by faith and not by works.” To many that means God does everything and man does nothing! However, the Scripture plainly declares that “by works a man *is* justified and *not by faith only*” (James 2:24). We must remember that there are works of *men* (Eph. 2:9) and works of *God* (John 6:28,29). The former are things that *men* devise to please the Lord and the latter are things that *God* has devised by which He will be pleased when men do them. Faith is one of God’s “works” (John 6:29).
  - i. Our salvation in becoming Christians and our salvation in remaining Christians both depend on “working the works of God” (John 6:28). Obedience to gospel commands [works of God] *clearly* was demanded of first-century converts to Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:12,13; 10:47,48; 16:33; 18:8; 22:16). It is by doing God’s works that we demonstrate His “workmanship” that has taken unsightly and sin-scarred raw material and has fashioned a beautiful “new creation” from it. It is the Lord’s

purpose that we *continue* to display His handiwork to the world by continuing to participate in *good* works. These are things Christians do because *God* has ordered them, not because they come from human judgment. [See Matt. 7:21-23.]

Verses 11-22-- **THE CHURCH-- GOD'S UNIVERSAL HABITATION** [Section Four]

1. Once again, Paul reminds these Gentile converts of how far they had come in their spiritual progress. This would make them more *appreciative* of what the Lord had done for them in spite of their unpromising background as "Gentiles in the flesh." It would also help them to be more *humble* to review how totally undeserving they were of the spiritual blessings they now shared with their Jewish brethren in the church.
2. Disadvantages God had overcome in justifying the Gentiles.
  - a. They were "called" the uncircumcision by the circumcision [Jewish nation]. Of course, they literally did not participate in religious circumcision as the Jews did. But being "called" uncircumcised by Israelites was intended to be extremely disparaging of their moral character. "For the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4:9), expresses the Jewish attitude toward all people who were not of their nation. Not only did the Jews glory in the fact that Gentiles *had* no covenant with the Jewish Jehovah but also in a conviction that they *never could have*. Jews wore circumcision proudly as a badge of guaranteed favor with God, and they discounted the worth of anyone who did not have access to the same "warranty." This attitude was especially present in those who were circumcised in the flesh but not in the heart. [See Romans 2:28,29.]
  - b. They were "without" Christ. In a large sense, the Jews were also without Him. But, unlike the Gentiles, their heritage was filled with an expectation of a "Messiah" [Hebrew], or "Christ" [Greek], who would appear to deliver the nation from all its woes. No such figure existed in the Gentile culture.
  - c. They were "aliens" from the commonwealth of Israel. "Aliens" [*allotrios*--"belonging to another"] were not included in the special relationship between Jehovah and the "commonwealth" [*politeia*-- "state, civil polity"] of Israel. Only to Jewish citizens accrued "the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises." From the nation had come "the fathers, and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came..." (Rom. 9:4,5).
  - d. They were strangers from the covenants of promise. Jehovah originally made His promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3,7. Included were promises of a large nation, a good land, and a descendant by whom all nations would be blessed. These promises [covenant] were repeated to Abraham in Gen. 22:17,18; to Isaac in Gen. 26:3,4; and to Jacob in Gen. 28:13,14. The Ten Commandments covenant was made later between God and Israel (Deut. 4:13), and another one involved David (2Sam. 7:11f.). The Gentile nations shared in none of these transactions or in the advantages attached to them.

- e. They had no hope because they were “without God” in the world. Any hope of redemption from the “world” [of condemnation] in which they lived must come from outside all natural remedies. Only some supernatural intervention could change their hopeless prospect.
- f. ***BUT NOW***-- something supernatural had occurred to give hope to the hopeless. By the redeeming sacrifice of Christ Jesus those who had been *far off* could now be *made near* to Jehovah God! Every obstacle to the redemption of Gentiles had been overcome. Every spiritual blessing enjoyed by Jewish Christians was now open to Gentile Christians as well (Eph. 1:3).
- g. Christ’s blood did what nothing else could do: “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).
- h. Although redemption was made *possible* for *all men* by Christ’s blood sacrifice, none are justified without complying with God’s requirements to *access* the benefits of the cross. Hebrews 10:19f. specifies those requirements:
  - (1) Demonstrating boldness to enter heaven by Christ’s virtue, not our own;
  - (2) Drawing near to God in sincere faith (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24);
  - (3) Having a heart sprinkled [dedicated to God’s service-- Exo.24:8] from an *evil* conscience [“the sense of guiltiness before God”] by repentance (Acts 3:19);
  - (4) Having the body washed with water in baptism (1Pet. 3:21) in response to a change in the conscience from *evil* to good;
  - (5) Holding fast the profession of faith made in primary obedience to gospel commands by continued obedience to all other gospel commands.
- i. “Leveling the playing field” for the Gentiles was an integral part of the Lord’s “mystery” (1:9). Jesus’ sacrifice had changed everything for them, and its benefits to people who had been “far off” but now could be “near” called for further elaboration.
- j. Paul had dealt in previous statements with the *contrast* between the spiritual *advantages* of the Jews and the *disadvantages* of the Gentiles. But the interjection of Christ into the picture now allows the apostle to move instead to *comparisons*. Jesus had made *both* peoples *ONE* [the same] in their spiritual identity and in their spiritual opportunity to embrace the saving blood of the *world’s* Savior. He had done this by:
  - (1) Breaking down the wall [*mesotoichon*-- “a partition wall”] that alienated the Jews and Gentiles from one another. Colossians 2:14 identifies the wall as “the handwriting of requirements” of the Law of Moses. There it is said that Jesus “wiped it out,” “took it out of the way,” and “nailed it to the cross.”
    - (a) The *exclusiveness* of the Law had erected a barrier between its recipients [Jews] and others nations that could not be ignored. But the *arrogant*

*attitude* of the Jews toward other people because of the Law made the division even worse;

- (b) The “enmity” between Jews and Gentiles was real and deep. It existed and was frequently exhibited by both sides. Any reconciliation was most unlikely. But Jesus’ sacrifice of His body removed the Law both as a vehicle by which to approach God and as a cause for the bad feelings generated between Jews and other nations. In [a relationship with] Him *two* peoples would be treated [in the same way] as if they were *one*;
- (c) Jews could no more be reconciled to God with the Law of Moses than Gentiles could without the Law. It was “against” [a disadvantage to] Gentiles in many ways *not* to have it, but it was also “against” Jews (Col. 2:14) because they *had* it but could not *keep* it! Both situations cried out for the Law to be removed;
- (d) Through the cross all nations could be reconciled to God and to one another. The cross killed Jesus through the *worst* possible sin (Acts 3:14, 15), but at the same time it also killed soul-damning enmity and offered to everyone the *best* possible blessing of spiritual peace.
- (2) Coming and preaching peace to those afar off. Although Jesus’ great invitation to lost men is, “COME” (Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17), He “CAME” preaching the gospel to lost Jews and Gentiles through the apostles (Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47).
  - (a) Preaching the *same message* by the *same Spirit of inspiration* to both peoples made it possible for both to have the *same access* to the Father and to His salvation;
- k. Now, Paul continues to turn from *contrasts* to *comparisons* (vs. 19-22).
  - (1) He has already cited the differences that had existed between the Jews and the Gentiles (2:11,12).
  - (2) Now, [since the cross] those differences no longer exist.

The Way It WAS:

- (a) Few citizens, many foreigners to God’s physical kingdom;
- (b) God’s family limited to Israel;
- (c) Only Jews had a foundation of prophecy on which to build faith;
- (d) Moses was chief cornerstone of Jews’ faith in Jehovah;
- (e) Jehovah “dwelt” in Jews’ temple of worship and sacrifice. Only idols “dwelt” in other temples.

The Way It IS:

- (a) All are fellow [equal] citizens in God’s spiritual kingdom;
- (b) God’s family [church] open to all;
- (c) All have same foundation of revelation on which to build faith;
- (d) Jesus Christ is chief cornerstone of faith for all believers;
- (e) God dwells in the “whole building” [Jews and Gentiles] as a temple [church] of worship and sacrifice.

- l. The basic purpose pursued by Paul in Ephesians is to emphasize that a saving relationship with Jehovah is now possible for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. Not only so, but that relationship is the same for both nations, and it demands the same obedience and offers the same rewards for both.
- m. Understanding the nature of Lord's church unravels the "mystery" of the ages. How did the Lord plan to redeem all men who desired to be saved? How did He plan to bring them together in one harmonious body that would serve Him in ways that would bring praise and glory to His wisdom and power? Such a plan was beyond the comprehension of men (1Cor. 2:9).
- n. God's "mystery" is revealed in the church because it solves all the problems associated with bringing all redeemed people into the same unity that is basic to the nature of the Divine Three:  
    "...that they all may be one as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21).
- o. The church is (verses 19-22):
  - The kingdom of God (Col. 1:13)-- Every member is a citizen equal [fellow] with all other citizens;
  - The sanctified of God (1Cor. 1:2)-- Every member is equally "set apart" to be special to God;
  - The household of God (1Tim. 3:15)-- Every member is equally recognized and treated as part of God's spiritual family;
  - Founded on inspired revelation of the apostles and prophets (Matt. 16:18)-- Every member has access to the same truth as all others;
  - Shaped in doctrine and practice by Christ as the cornerstone (Isa. 28:16)-- Every member enjoys the same divine guidance for obedience as everyone else;
  - One whole building (1Pet. 2:5)-- Every member functions as part of a whole, and all parts [rooms] of the building are joined and dependent on all other parts;
  - The holy temple of God (1Cor. 3:16,17)-- Every member is privileged to represent himself to God in worship and to enjoy equal access to His throne;
  - The habitation of God (John 14:23)-- Every member, by love of the truth, can be as close to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as anyone else. Heaven will play no favorites.

1. Christians had been made \_\_\_\_\_ when they were \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Those who live by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ fulfill the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Christians were made \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ and were \_\_\_\_\_ up \_\_\_\_\_ to sit with \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. "For by \_\_\_\_\_ you have been \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, and that not of \_\_\_\_\_; it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God."
5. No one can honestly \_\_\_\_\_ of his own \_\_\_\_\_.
6. God prepared \_\_\_\_\_ that we should walk in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. In verse 12, what were *four* spiritual disadvantages of being a Gentile?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Those who were \_\_\_\_\_ are made \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Christ made \_\_\_\_\_ by abolishing the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and creating \_\_\_\_\_ new \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ old ones.
10. All men are \_\_\_\_\_ to God in \_\_\_\_\_ through the \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Everyone can have \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ through the \_\_\_\_\_.
12. In verses 19-22, what are *five* spiritual advantages now shared by *all* men?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter ThreeVerses 1-13-- THE CHURCH-- GOD'S MYSTERY REVEALED [Section Five]

1. The previous chapter was spent in discussing the eternal plan by which God purposed to bestow equal spiritual blessings (1:3) on Gentiles as well as Jews. Jehovah now considers the *two* nations as *one* and dwells with *both* in the church, which is His habitation through the work of the Spirit (2:22).
2. It was for “this reason” that Paul apparently sets out to *encourage* the Ephesians in their newly-found status as God’s children. They could easily have become *discouraged* in learning that Paul, who already had labored diligently and sacrificed much in their behalf, had been taken prisoner by the Romans and now at that very moment stood in jeopardy of losing his life.
3. The Ephesian Christians realized that Paul’s problems, in large measure, had been caused by his work in bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. The immediate reason for his present imprisonment had been a false charge of taking a Gentile into the Jewish temple in Jerusalem (Acts 21:28,29).
4. Paul seemed concerned that his own circumstances might adversely affect the faith of some Gentile converts. They might interpret his situation either as an indication that God was unable to protect His apostle from harm or that He was so uncaring about Paul’s mission to Gentile nations that He had allowed such a bad thing to happen to him. In either case, their faith could have been severely shaken.
5. The sentence structure of these verses indicates that Paul interrupted his initial thought and injected other things he decided suddenly needed to be said. After these remarks were made, he appears to resume his original statement of encouragement in verse 13.
6. The apostle feels a need to strengthen the Ephesians’ appreciation of what God had done for them by stressing his own role as the Lord’s *special* messenger with a *special* task to accomplish among Gentile peoples. Of course, his readers had heard of his “dispensation” [*oikonomia*-- “a stewardship”] to “properly handle” the opportunity of grace bestowed on heathen sinners. Paul’s blessing was theirs as well.
7. He had already brought to their attention the revelation of the “mystery” of Gentile salvation in the things he had said in chapters one and two [in “few words”]. His previous statements might not disclose *everything* that he knew about the mystery, but what he had said was enough to cause them to be deeply grateful for that “mystery.” In the following verses, he will cite several details included in God’s eternal plan, most of which he has already mentioned in one form or another.
8. In “other ages” God *had* made known certain features of His plan for Gentiles [e.g.,

Gen. 12:3; Isa. 49:6]. But never before “now” [the gospel age] had His purpose been *as* fully and completely explained. Old Testament prophets had offered limited information about Christ’s role in God’s mystery, but now New Testament apostles and prophets were being taught by the Spirit the details of the plan. Also, whereas it had been premature to call on men to *act* in response to their limited knowledge of the *coming* Christ, now it was for the very reason of “obedience to the faith” that the apostles were revealing the specifics of God’s scheme of redemption to the Gentiles (Rom. 16:25,26).

9. Those specifics were important enough to bear repetition to the Ephesians:
  - a. The Gentiles were now “fellow heirs” with the Jews and eligible to enjoy the wonderful bounty of heaven’s spiritual blessings [See 1:3.];
  - b. They were also now “of the same body” and could claim Christ as their spiritual leader and benefactor [See 1:19.];
  - c. The “promise” to bless “all families” of the earth (Gen. 12:3) had for centuries only been applied to the Jews’ “*Messiah*” [Hebrew]. Now, Gentiles had their own “*Christ*” [Greek], and He would give the same deliverance to them as the Jews expected from their Messiah.
10. The inclusiveness of a gospel that offered salvation to the *whole world* generated in Paul a deep sense of responsibility and satisfaction as the one man especially chosen to “get the word out” to all. The power of God, first displayed in the conversion of this avowed enemy of the cross (Acts 9, 22, 26), and later seen in the apostle’s own supernatural deeds [e.g., Acts 14:10; 19:11,12; 28:3-5], had indeed been “effective” in Paul’s labors as a *minister* [*diakonos*-- “servant”] of God’s grace.
11. It was almost unseemly that the honor of bearing the “unsearchable riches” of the gospel should be given to a man who considered himself to be the “least of the apostles” and even “less than the least of *all* the saints” because of his earlier opposition to that same gospel (1Cor. 15:9). Perhaps he was concerned that some might think that the “crown jewels” of the kingdom ought not be carried about by a servant with a “criminal record.” However, humility and gratitude made Paul all the more devoted to his role of *preaching* the gospel. In the same way, he thought, Gentile converts should be all the more *faithful* to a gospel that allowed their own earlier opposition to the true God to be swallowed up and forgotten in the exercise of heaven’s mercy and grace.
12. Paul’s task as an apostle was not only to take and tell the gospel to the lost but also to “make them see” the value of its content. “Opening the eyes” of the Gentiles was a part of his original apostolic commission (Acts 26:18). He would do anything to enhance the acceptance of his preaching by souls that were hurtling toward death and eternity. He became “all things to all men” to save some (1Cor. 9:22).
13. Some basics he wished to make men understand and appreciate were addressed.
  - a. The “fellowship” of the mystery. In the NKJV “fellowship” is *koinonia*-- “sharing

in common,” but in the ASV the word is *oikonomia*-- “a dispensation.” Paul’s point is either that God’s mystery plan provides for mutual sharing in its benefits by Gentiles as well as Jews, or that the plan proclaimed in the gospel is the way in which He will *dispense* or *administer* eternal life in the judgment. Either way, it was crucial for the lost to recognize that the apostles were “earthen vessels” who were bringing them an immeasurable heavenly “treasure” toward which they must display faith and obedience (2Cor. 4:7).

- b. This gospel “age” is the first time that faith and obedience can be practiced by men to their salvation. The mystery was hidden [unrevealed] from “the beginning” (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1,2)-- a long, long time! How favored these people were to live in the time when the package of heaven’s blessings (Eph. 1:3) could finally be unwrapped and its contents enjoyed to the fullest!
- c. The *same* God and the *same* Christ whose power had created and sustained the physical world also possessed the power to create and sustain a spiritual world in which the *church* would play a central role as *the* body of Christ.
- d. The mind of God is as clearly seen in what He has made-- the natural world and the spiritual world-- as the minds of men are known by what they have produced-- the Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid, the international space station, etc.
- e. The *manifold* [*polupoikilos*-- “much varied”] wisdom of God is easily seen by those who will seriously examine the features of the Lord’s church. Jesus described it in various ways in the parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13. It is a complex, yet simple, entity. Its identifying characteristics constitute an institution both profound in its concepts and perfectly logical in its operation. Divinity has shaped it not only by the things that are *included* in it but also by the things that are *not*.
- f. The church fulfills God’s “eternal purpose” to utilize Christ Jesus as the *one* divine agent by whom lost mankind could be redeemed from perdition. Jesus’ singular accomplishment was intended to be revealed to the “principalities and powers in the ‘heavenly places’.” Some suppose that these are angels and other non-human beings who participate in human affairs and consequently are interested in whatever impacts men and women in the world (1Pet.1:12). These beings dwell in “heavenly places.” An alternative interpretation would explain these principalities and powers as various entities that exercise a controlling influence in our daily lives and that would do well in their dealings with men to replicate the characteristics they can see in the conduct of Christ’s church. It is a part of the “heavenly” [plan] that worldly government should remain in the hands of the world and that heavenly government [as demonstrated in the conduct of the church] should serve as a leaven to improve relationships between the two (Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 13:33).
- g. The true worth of Christ’s church is recognized in the fact that it was formed in salvation’s plan in *eternity past*. Its concept was perfect at its origin, and no change has been needed in its specifications before or since it was made operational in the

world at Pentecost (Acts 2).

14. All the things Paul knew about salvation in the church were the things he had been sent to “make all men see.” These were also the things that gave the apostle boldness and confidence. He was convinced of the goodness of God and of the reality of hope for all who in faith would look beyond this world into the glories of a better world.
15. Back to the thought that he had interrupted in verse one, Paul now urges the Ephesians not to stumble in their pursuit of heaven just because he was suffering the inconvenience and unpleasantness of a Roman cell. Their worth to him and to the Lord was exhibited by his own willingness to suffer physical deprivation that they might have the gospel with all its blessings.

Verses 14-21-- THE CHURCH-- GOD’S GLORY MANIFESTED [Section Six]

1. “This reason” was the glory of the Ephesians’ salvation for which Paul had been willing to sacrifice himself and suffer imprisonment. He was grateful for the opportunity to be allowed to take the gospel to the Gentiles and “bowed his knees” in expression of his gratitude.
2. A family name signifies *identity* and *belonging*. It establishes kinship among those who bear the name. God’s “whole family” consists of all in heaven and on earth who have a special relationship with Him. The church is God’s family on earth (1Tim. 3: 15). John saw a great multitude in heaven (Rev. 7:9,10), representing the innumerable family members who ultimately will occupy the “many dwelling places” of heaven. This “whole” family on earth and in heaven consists of Jews and Gentiles, both living and dead, and possibly even the angels, elders, and living creatures that were gathered around God’s throne in John’s vision (Rev. 7:11). All are “named” from the same Father, i.e., all claim a spiritual identity with Jehovah that distinguishes them from all other “names.” Jesus, in that sense, is in this “whole family,” and He claims the *same* Father as the rest of the family.
3. Another possible “naming” by the Father is the “appointing” [Webster] He has done in assigning the various segments of the faithful to their rightful “heavenly places.” The *place* of living saints on earth is to live righteously and to serve Him in their respective functions in the church. This role will become the focus of the remaining chapters of the letter. Dead Christians who are now glorified or who will be glorified in the future will continue to serve and praise Him in heaven as they are seen to do in John’s great vision. Other spiritual beings [angels, living creatures, etc.] also have their *places* in the divine plan that comprehends the space from eternity to eternity.
4. Paul’s *first* prayer for this church was recorded in Chapter one, verses 17-19, where he asked in their behalf: (1) a spirit of wisdom; (2) understanding of truth; (3) hope of spiritual success; (4) realization of the magnitude of the eternal reward; (5) certainty of divine power to support their efforts toward salvation.
5. His *second* prayer is found here in verses 16-19. It is similar to the first in its stress on

the development of spiritual strength through the influence of God's revelation on man's heart. The apostle makes specific requests for them.

- a. Strength through God's Spirit in the "inner man." Increasing spiritual strength would enable them to fulfill the role assigned to them in the "heavenly places." Righteous living and dedicated service *don't just happen*. They require adequate knowledge, meditation, good decision-making, and [most of all] a lot of prayer (1Thes. 5:15-22). In this way, the "inner man" can be constantly renewed (2Cor. 4:16). Strengthening of the human spirit only comes through the Holy Spirit and the word of God (Acts 20:32).
- b. The indwelling of Christ in their hearts through faith. "Christ in us" is our only hope of eternal glory (Col. 1:27). Only to the extent that Christ controls our thoughts and our lives will we conform to the Father's will and be pleasing to Him. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit dwell in the Christian by faith, and faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Knowledge of Christ will "enlighten our understanding" (1:17,18) of our obligations to serve as well as of our opportunities to profit in the gospel.
- c. A rooting and grounding in love. Knowledge and understanding of his place in the "mystery" of human salvation are worthless to the Christian unless his attitude toward God and toward other people is right. Love is the foundation of *every victory* won in the war against unrighteousness. Love toward God will lead us to real obedience to His will (1John 5:3), and love toward other people will monitor and control our daily behavior (1Cor. 13). Plants cannot flourish without good root systems, nor can buildings withstand storms without good foundations. And we cannot sustain acceptable conduct in Christ's church if love does not pervade our every action (1John 4:16).
- d. Ability to comprehend the expanse of Christ's love for man. Although *knowledge* of God's revelation is the key to understanding God's *mystery*, there are some things that "pass knowledge." Christ's love is one of them. We can read of the love that the Savior *feels* for us; we can read also of the loving things that He *has done* for us. But our human concepts of love limit us from fully comprehending what divine love really is. The width, length, depth, and height of Jesus' love cannot be measured in human terms. All we can do is to know that His capacity to love is far beyond our capacity to understand, and in the deep humility of our unworthiness we can be thankful for all that His love has done for us (John 3:16).
- e. A "filling" with the fullness of God. God's "fullness" [*pleroma*-- the completeness of His Being] embraces the entirety of His attributes. In the same way, Christ is said to possess the "fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). Jesus' declaration, "Therefore you shall be perfect [complete] just as your Father in heaven is perfect," is mirrored in Paul's aspiration for the members of the Ephesian church. God's perfect character is an unreachable goal for human beings, but it provides clear bench marks by which the developing Christian can measure his progress.

6. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians has set the bar very high. Other than speaking of their "faith in the Lord Jesus" and of their "love for all the saints" (1:15), he has said nothing about the extent of their prior progress in the Lord. Until now, his emphasis has been on their *opportunity* rather than on their *performance*. Some of the less zealous members might have considered his expectations for them much *too* high.
7. Not so. What we ask of God may appear excessive to the fainthearted, but His power is more than enough to provide our requests, no matter how far from reach they may seem. In fact, Paul employs *three* terms to stress the Lord's abilities. The power that works in us [for us] can grant us *exceedingly*, *abundantly*, and *above* anything we can even think! How great is that!
8. Paul closes the first section of the Ephesian letter, which has extolled the essential place in His eternal plan that God has assigned to the church, with a summarizing statement. "To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
9. The church is the culmination of every purpose of the divine mind in the salvation of lost sinners. The manifold wisdom displayed by God in every facet of the nature and function of His church is more than enough reason for us to glorify His name and to give Him our thanksgiving for the opportunity that Christians have been given to share in the abundant spiritual blessings that membership in the church affords.
10. Albert Barnes comments on "throughout all ages, world without end":

There is a richness and amplification of language here which shows that his heart was full of the subject, and that it was difficult to find the words to express his conceptions. It means, in the strongest sense, FOR EVER. It is one of the apostles' "self-invented phrases" [Bloomfield]; and Blackwall says that no version can fully express the meaning. It is literally, "Unto all generations of the ages of ages," or "unto all the generations of the eternity of eternities, or the eternity of ages." It is the language of a heart FULL of the love of God, and desiring that he might be praised without ceasing for ever and ever.

1. God had by \_\_\_\_\_ made known His \_\_\_\_\_ to Paul.
2. When people \_\_\_\_\_ God's revelation they can \_\_\_\_\_ Paul's \_\_\_\_\_ of God's \_\_\_\_\_.
3. God's \_\_\_\_\_ is now revealed by the \_\_\_\_\_ through the holy \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The "mystery" is that \_\_\_\_\_ are equal \_\_\_\_\_ of the same \_\_\_\_\_ and can partake of God's \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Paul was a \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ according to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of God is seen in the \_\_\_\_\_, according to His \_\_\_\_\_ accomplished in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is named from the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Christians need to be \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ man.
9. Christ can dwell in our \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ and will \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ us in love.
10. We should try to comprehend the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ's love, but it passes \_\_\_\_\_.
11. We also should try to be \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
12. To God should be \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ forever.

Chapter Four

Verses 1-16-- THE CHURCH-- GOD'S FUNCTIONAL FAMILY [Section Seven]

1. The last verse of chapter three proclaimed the basic purpose for the existence of the church in the world: "...to Him be *glory* in the church by Jesus Christ..." Two components in God's plan must work together to accomplish that purpose-- (1) Jesus Christ and (2) the members who comprise the church on earth.
2. Chapters 1-3 unfolded the excellence of Christ's work in executing the *divine* elements of God's "mystery." His death on the cross effectively reconciled Jews and Gentiles to God and to one another "in one body...putting to death the enmity"(2:16).
3. The task assumed by the Ephesian Christians in their conversion was also vital to their own ultimate salvation and to the salvation of others who might yet be attracted to the gospel. They had been chosen not only to have their past sins forgiven but also to "be holy and without blame before Him in love" (1:4). A godly life on their part would be instrumental in bringing other souls to the Lord.
4. Paul introduces the Ephesians' responsibilities to heaven's plan with "Therefore..." Their "walk" [life] must be "worthy of the calling" to which they had responded. They had been called to become members of God's own *family* (1Tim. 3:15). Now they must conform to the "house rules" in a way that would demonstrate that the family was entirely *functional* because the manifold wisdom of the Lord had been the driving force in its shaping (3:10). An important part of that wisdom was to show how human morality could be elevated to a new level largely out of man's gratitude for the selfless sacrifice of a sinless Christ to redeem souls whose lifestyle earlier had made them "children of wrath." [See 2Cor. 7:1.]
5. Paul's first "rule" was aimed at ATTITUDES IN THE FAMILY (vs.1,2). Lowliness [humility], gentleness, longsuffering [*makrothumia*-- "a long temper"], and forbearance [*anecho*-- "to hold up; to endure"] were necessary characteristics to be cultivated. Love would foster a mindset that would prompt patience toward those whose behavior might otherwise become offensive.
6. The second demand placed on the Father's children concerned UNITY IN THE FAMILY (vs. 3-6). "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We don't know the composition of the Ephesian church. Certainly, the larger part was Gentile. But some Jewish members were almost as certainly numbered in the congregation. Paul's challenge was appropriate both to the local situation at Ephesus and to relationships among Gentile and Jewish Christians everywhere.

7. This unity and peace had *already* been achieved through Jesus' blood sacrifice. Peace and unity now needed to be kept so that the spiritual family could remain functional as God has planned.
8. Unity and peace were equally important to the functionality of the spiritual family. Doctrinal oneness and personal harmony in tandem will contribute significantly to the attractiveness of God's church to the world around it. However, one without the other will harm rather than enhance the world's appreciation of the wisdom of God. Neither would come easily among Jews and Gentiles, even though they were in the *same* family. All must "endeavor" [*spoudazo*-- "to be diligent"] to succeed in "speaking the same thing" [unity of doctrine] while harboring "no divisions" [peaceful relations] among themselves (1Cor. 1:10). Such success would extol God's wisdom in the church because such harmony would have been impossible without supernatural intervention.
9. There were seven reasons why doctrinal unity and personal peace were sustainable:
  - a. *There was one body* in which both nations served God together on the same basis. God's mystery had never planned for *two churches*, one for Jews and another for Gentiles. Any lack of unanimity would deny Jesus' plea for all disciples to be ONE as He and the Father are ONE (John 17:21). One church for all would prevent any competition and jealousy among the Lord's people.
  - b. *There was one Spirit* who had made possible the unity and peace among all nations which must now be maintained. The Spirit had guided the apostles into the truth that uncovered the great mystery of equality between Israel and other peoples (John 14:26; 16:13). These messengers, under the guidance of the *same* Spirit, had spoken the *same* message of hope to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:36-39; 10:43-48). Both segments of the church had been sealed [authenticated] by the same miraculous gifts of the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 1Cor. 12:11). No preferential treatment had been given, nor would any be given in the future, toward one nation over another (Acts 10:34,35).
  - c. *There was one hope* offered to all converts, no matter their backgrounds or national origins. That was, first, the hope of redemption from sin. Then, every member had the same expectation of "all spiritual blessings" in God's family (1:3) as every other member. Most importantly of all, the eternal inheritance of heaven was available to every saint without discrimination (1:11-13). This hope of salvation provided equal motivation for people of every nation to do whatever it took to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." [See Rom. 8:24.]
  - d. *There was one Lord* from whom all Christians took their marching orders. "Lord" is the prime signature of authority and command. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance lists some 1800 verses throughout the Bible that contain the term. Both Jew and Gentile were obligated to "do all in the name [authority] of the Lord" (Col. 3:17). Each would be rewarded according to his measure of obedience to the

Lord's uniform demands.

- e. *There was one faith* to be embraced and practiced. That faith had come to both peoples in the proclamation of the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Inspired teachers taught the *same* truth in *every* church, whether it was of Jewish or Gentile composition, or both (1Cor. 4:17). That truth produced the *same faith* in Jesus as the risen Savior in every receptive heart and called forth the *same confession of faith* from every responsive mouth (Rom. 10:8-11). One truth produced one faith, which accounted for one practice among all who were in the one body.
  - f. *There was one baptism* practiced in all the churches when the gospel was preached and men became obedient to its demands. This was the *one baptism* connected with the *one faith* when Jesus commissioned the apostles to take salvation into all the world-- "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:15,16). It was a baptism *for* [*eis*-- "unto"] the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It was the point of obedience at which sins were "washed away" (Acts 22:16) and at which all the baptized were "added to the church" by the Lord (Acts 2:47; 1Cor. 12:13). The *one baptism* was an immersion in water preceded by repentance from sin and confession of the divinity of Jesus (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38).
  - g. *There was one God and Father* in this functional family. All the children were equally loved and fairly treated by their Father. All received the *same* instructions about what their Father expected of them as "good" children. *All* were assigned "chores" to perform for the welfare of the family, and all could expect equivalent rewards for faithful performance. The Father spoke, and the children listened and obeyed without hesitation or question. He was to be held in esteem "above" all others, His authority was to be respected in all His appointments, and His influence was to fully permeate every thought and deed of each member of the family.
10. A functional family that included people from diverse religious and social backgrounds was not only possible, is was inevitable for the church at Ephesus, if they followed Paul's prescription for unity and peace in all the activities of the church. *One head* (Eph. 1:22) would give only *one message* to the *one body* (Rom. 1:16,17); *one form* of obedience would be expected of "all who received the word" (Acts 2:41). The *one* [same] *baptism* would be practiced with every convert; and the *one* [same] *hope* would then fill the hearts and shape the daily lives of all who identified themselves as children of God.
  11. GIFTS FOR THE FAMILY had been provided to help them succeed in their great task of maintaining *unity* and *peace* among all parties (vs. 7-12). There was no room for allowing human wisdom to dictate spiritual decisions as the family members strove for unity and peace among themselves. The Lord's *special* grace had been given to each member of the local congregation who had a leading role to fill. This grace was bestowed in the form of spiritual gifts that would enable the recipients to

do things they could not have done on their own and to do them without the risk of error or failure.

12. This grace was not special to the church at Ephesus. Other congregations received similar expressions of favor (1Cor. 12, 13,14). Spiritual gifts had been promised to the church long before its existence in the world. Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 which originally proclaimed the victories of Jehovah over His enemies. Here it is clearly applied to the miraculous powers that Jesus had invested in the local churches in the first century. Interestingly, Paul slightly changed David's wording from "*received* gifts among men" to "*gave* gifts to men." However, one would expect that gifts received by a victor might be passed along to his supporters, and that seems to be the approach Paul takes with the passage. At any rate, Jesus gave gifts [powers] to His followers, having received them from the Father upon returning in triumph to heaven (Acts 2:33).
13. Jesus' power to provide "every spiritual blessing" (1:3) for His church once again is emphasized by Paul's citation of David's statement. The Father had invested *His* power in Christ when He sent Him into the lower parts of the earth and received Him back again. That power had been reinvested in Christ's church in the form of spiritual gifts. These gifts "filled" the needs of the Lord's people as they tried to live righteous lives and to remain faithful to the apostles' doctrine.
14. "The lower parts of the earth" either refers to the earth itself, as opposed to heaven, or, it refers to Hades into which Christ "descended" after the crucifixion. No certain application can be determined, but both meanings support the idea of God's divine power as it was demonstrated in Christ's experiences on earth.
15. *Nine* spiritual gifts of different kinds are listed in 1Corinthians 12, and this probably is a complete list of gifts available to the early church. Paul's treatment of the gifts in this chapter does not deal with the gifts *per se* but with those who had *received* them and who would utilize them in their leadership roles in God's spiritual family. *Four* such roles are specified, all of which were involved in *teaching* functions:
  - a. Some were made *apostles* with special gifts. These thirteen men [including Paul] occupied the most important teaching role in the early church. They appear to have been entrusted with multiple gifts [perhaps all nine?] (1Cor. 14:18; Acts 16: 9,18; 20:10; 28:5,6; etc.). They were afforded special recognition as ambassadors of Christ to the world (2Cor. 5:20). They apparently possessed a full rather than a partial revelation of the gospel (2Cor. 4:3,7; 1Cor. 13:9). They sat as judges when they proclaimed their message of truth (Matt. 19:28; 18:18). They met specific qualifications prior to their appointment (Acts 1:21,22), and they became apostles only after being personally selected to the office by Jesus Himself (Matt. 10:1-4; Acts 1:23-26).

The work of the apostles was not limited to one or even to a few churches. Instead, they appear to have been authorized to operate among all the churches in their

- official capacity (1Cor. 7:17; 2Cor. 11:28).
- b. Others were made *prophets* to teach the Lord's truths. Old Testament prophets had delivered God's truth to Old Testament people, but these were New Testament prophets who received partial revelations of the gospel for the saints. A prophet [*prophetes*-- "one who speaks forth or openly"] always spoke by inspiration rather than out of his own personal knowledge of the truth (1Cor. 12:10). Each one received only a partial revelation of truth [according to what truth was needed in a particular local church] (1Cor. 13:9; 14:29-32), and prophecies were not necessarily related to future events (1Cor. 14:3).
  - c. *Evangelists* [*euangelistes*-- "a messenger of good"] were involved in preaching the gospel to the saved (2Tim. 4:5; 1Tim.4:6) and to the lost (2Tim. 2:25). Since the term is associated with "messenger," it is thought by some that evangelists usually moved about with their messages, although Timothy was left to "remain at Ephesus," at least for a while (1Tim. 1:3).
  - d. Still others served the churches as *pastors and teachers*. These two terms probably refer to the *same* rather than to different persons. "Pastors" are *elders, bishops, overseers, shepherds* in their respective congregations. They must be "able to teach" (1Tim. 3:2) and "by sound doctrine exhort and convict those who contradict" (Tit.1:9). Since they *oversaw* the teaching [and all other] activities of the local church, it was fitting that pastors would be among those who received special gifts related to the teaching function.
16. The *need* for special gifts by men who would be instrumental in the teaching activities of the first-century church is also addressed by Paul in verses 12-15. *Teaching* the family of God effectively would:
- a. **Equip the saints for the work of ministry.** Whatever ministry [*diakonia*-- "service"] was needed, sound instruction was essential to its performance. All "the saints" had responsibilities to serve according to their gifts and abilities (1Pet. 4:10), and it was encouraging to know that the success of their work would be enhanced by the help of men who had the help of heaven;
  - b. **Edify the body of Christ.** The strength of the body would depend on the strength of its members. Every member requires edifying [*oikodome*-- "the act of building"] to be competent in his peculiar work in the congregation. It is by the "word of His grace" that we are edified (Acts 20:32), so special assistance in teaching was very welcome during the time before God's *written* revelation was available to spiritually young and inexperienced Christians;
  - c. **Nurture the disciples until they came to the unity of the faith.** "The" faith was the gospel revelation (Gal. 1:23). It was the composite message of salvation that had been or would be delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Revelation at this time [A.D. 60-61] was still incomplete, evidenced by epistles yet to be written [e.g., 1&2 Timothy,

1&2Peter, 1John, The Revelation]. Everything already being taught by gifted men and everything that was yet to be taught must form *one harmonious body of information*. Only *one faith* was allowed (Eph. 4:5). It was not a “unity of faith” wherein “believers” just *agreed about the “fundamentals”* of the gospel, but rather it was the opportunity for all men to *have access* to a body of truth that was absolutely accurate and complete in every way. That would occur when every truth “once for all” (Jude 3) had been written for the guidance of those whose sights were set on heaven. Meanwhile, the inspired messages of gifted teachers would keep the church “in the straight and narrow” way. The “knowledge” of Christ gained from “the faith” would provide ample protection from influences that sought to lead saints away from loyalty to their Savior (2Pet. 1:2,3);

- d. **Promote growth that would replicate the fullness of Christ’s image.** The immature Christian must be “molded” into the likeness of Jesus’ character and behavior. He must follow the steps of the Lord as his prime example of how to overcome sin and how to behave toward others (1Pet. 2:21-23). He is obligated to shape his own image to mirror the *full* image of Christ as far as he is able. The “perfect” [complete] man is his never-changing goal, and every decision he makes about things right and wrong must be made in keeping with his purpose of reaching ever closer to that goal. But since “It is not in man... to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23), the guidance available in God’s revelation is all that he has to assure that he is always walking in the right direction. First-century Christians necessarily depended on the inspired teaching that came through their special teachers for that assurance;
- e. **Protect immature disciples from the dangers of their immaturity.** There are many ways in which we should be like children (Matt. 18:3). However, in *understanding* Christians must be *mature* (1Cor. 14:20). As children are usually more subject to deception and intimidation than adults, so untaught converts are more likely to be led away from the truth than those who have been taught extensively. “And you shall *know* the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Ignorance breeds instability, and those unskilled in the word of the Lord are especially vulnerable to the “winds of [false] doctrine,” and to the “trickery” and “cunning craftiness” of shameless men who will stoop to any level to promote their own selfish interests. As early disciples would learn, it was imperative that they remember, “do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1John 4:1);
- f. **Encourage every family member to become a teacher of the truth.** It is not enough to keep ourselves from religious error. Our task also requires that we try to rescue others from its condemning consequences (1Tim. 4:16; Jude 23). This we do by “speaking the truth” and speaking it “in love.” *What* we teach and *how* we teach it are both important. Paul realized that his responsibility as a teacher of God’s truth was: (1) never compromise his message (Gal. 2:5) but, (2) always be willing to “be-

come all things to all men” that he might “save some” (1Cor. 9:22). Our love for those we teach should guide us as teachers as much as our love for what we teach.

- (1) The ultimate goal for “we all” (vs. 13)-- all early Christians-- was to develop into a fully grown spiritual body [church], capable of being self-sustaining when the time came for removing the special miraculous helps that were at that time providing crucial guidance and protection to the untaught and immature.
- (2) That goal would be reached when this immature body [church] had “grown up” in *every* segment of the spiritual life that had been so carefully planned by their head, Jesus Christ. The teaching of truth through channels of inspiration in their prophets and teachers would allow both present and future Christians to fulfill completely heaven’s “mystery” for the saved.
- (3) Being “joined together” was the key to success as the early saints attempted to grow into the image of Christ. Jews and Gentiles must work together and every part take its share of the responsibility and do its share of the work if growth was to be “effective.” The several members of the body, being knit together and mutually dependent, must always function as one body. But only *love* for the truth and *love* for one another would allow that to happen. Edification [spiritual strength] must come from *within* the body, not from without.

#### Verses 17-32-- THE CHURCH-- GOD’S TRANSFORMED MAN [Section Eight]

1. Paul commended the Colossians for having been “delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13).
2. He urged the Romans, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1).
3. The remaining verses in this chapter expand on the concept of the “new man.” The New Testament church was intended to become that “new man” as it “proved” [*dokimazo*-- “to test, prove”-- with the expectation of approving] the manifold wisdom of God contained in His salvation plan [“mystery”].
4. The transformation of men was to be accomplished by a transformation of their “walking.” The Ephesian Christians had once walked as the “rest of the Gentiles,” i.e., the unsaved masses, still walked. Paul had already urged them in the first verse of this chapter to walk now in a manner consistent with their “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4,6). Apparently, they had made substantial progress toward that goal, but endurance was vital, and the apostle considered that a reminder of how far they had come might prove helpful to their continued efforts.
5. The futility of the typical “Gentile mind” prevented lost people from participating in God’s “mystery” and reaping “every spiritual blessing” (1:3) contained in it. The reasons for this were:

- a. It darkened their understanding [*dianoia*-- “a thinking through;” a perverted moral impulse]. Many Greeks were very proud of their culture and the advantages it had given to the world over time. But those who boasted of the worldly wisdom underlying this culture were actually not wise at all. Wise men “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17), but the Gentiles had widely “exchanged the truth of God for a lie” as they paid tribute to the ways of an ungodly world (Rom. 1:25). Romans 1:18-32 describes the downward path followed by the Gentiles as they plunged deeper and deeper into spiritual ignorance and fleshly indulgence;
  - b. It alienated them from the “life of God.” Sin long before had removed man from his access to endless life (Gen. 3:24). Only the removal of sin could restore that access (Rom. 6:7), and only by accepting the Sonship of Jesus Christ could that be done (Rom. 6:11);
  - c. It kept them in willful ignorance of truth that could save them. “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). The ignorant Gentiles were lost in their ignorance (Rom. 10:1), because ignorance is no excuse for disobedience to God’s will (Acts 17:30);
  - d. It hardened their hearts. Hard [*sklerotes*-- a covering with a *poros*, a kind of stone] hearts are difficult to penetrate with truth. For individuals who choose to resist the gospel, plenty of opportunities will be provided by the Lord for them to harden their hearts more and more. Pharaoh confirms this lesson. The guilt of hardening his heart lay at his own feet (Exo. 8:15, 32), but God raised many occasions during which Pharaoh would reaffirm his determination to reject the will of Jehovah (Exo. 10:27; 11:10). Hard hearts always prevent men from understanding God’s will, turning to God’s will, and being healed by God’s will (Isa. 6:10; John 12:40);
  - e. It blocked any remorse for their sins. They were without “feeling” [*apalgeo*-- “to cease to feel pain for”]. They had no consciousness of sin’s guilt that might have slowed their headlong rush into wickedness. Like the sinful Jews, they did not even know how to blush in all their wickedness (Jer. 6:15);
  - f. The “Gentile mind” had ultimately led its victims into a pit of spiritual self-destruction. They totally abandoned any thought of correcting their moral lives and “gave themselves over” to licentiousness (lasciviousness) [*aselegia*-- “absence of restraint, indecency”], uncleanness, and greediness. Theirs became a world of selfish indulgence and social irresponsibility, a world of “dog-eat-dog” and “every man for himself.”
6. The “Gentile mind” was entirely contrary to the mind of Christ and to the mind of faithful disciples (Phil. 2:5). What they had learned about the “good” mind of the Lord had impressed them with just how “bad” *their* past outlook on things had been. An understanding of the great differences between the two value systems would con-

strain them to make some drastic changes in their lives. There would be old habits and attitudes that would have to be “put off [away].” Practices and affections more appropriate to their new life in Christ’s church [composed of people “called out” to be holy--1Pet. 1:15,16] must be “put on [adopted].”

7. The “*new man*” could not be put on until these disciples had *renewed* their minds with a deep commitment to make of themselves, with the help of God, people who would demonstrate in their daily lives the beauty of the eternal “mystery” which had been formulated by the wisdom and mercy of the Almighty for the good of all mankind.
8. The “*new man*” had been created in baptism (Rom. 6:4). But that new creature was immature and a long way from the perfection intended for him by the Author of the “mystery.” The awesome task of their reformation had just begun, and success would not be easy. However, it was *God* who had planned this newness, and it was to *God’s* help they could turn in their struggle to change!
9. Their Gentile culture often made it difficult for Gentile converts to change long-standing practices. Things that had been accepted or tolerated in their society could no longer be done by disciples of Christ. Other things that had been considered unimportant had become very important among those who had obeyed the gospel and who had been added to the church. The Jews had been groomed in the high standards of morality demanded by the Law of Moses, but many Gentiles had experienced little exposure to any system of morality that might help them make the moral transition involved in their conversions.
10. This situation perhaps explains why Paul considered it necessary on several occasions to list *specific* practices that must be discontinued and other particular things that must be initiated by Gentile disciples. Such lists are also found in Romans 12:9-21; 13:13; 1Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-23; Col. 3:5-14.
11. There were things that must be “put off.”
  - a. Lying (vs. 25). *All* liars will be cast into hell in the “second death” (Rev. 21:8). The righteous nature of God makes it *impossible* for Him to lie (Heb. 6:18). Christians develop the “divine nature” as they shed garments of sin and put on garments of righteousness (2Pet. 1:4). Lying becomes as foreign to their new character as it has always been to the essence of Jehovah.
  - b. Anger and wrath (vs.26). “Anger” [*orge*] and “wrath” [*parorgismos*] have similar but slightly different meanings. *Orge* [anger] was held as the “strongest of all passions.” *Parorgismos* [wrath] was “provocation” and Vine suggests that it indicates a shorter duration of anger than *orge*, which, he says, implies in this verse “a just occasion for the feeling.” In the light of such distinctions, commentators differ in their interpretations of the verse.
    - (1) Reactions of anger are normal in most people and are to be expected to occur from time to time. When they do, Christians must control their angry feelings

and not commit sin by saying or doing things that display a lack of love and patience toward the offender, which would be sinful. Furthermore, any wrathful feelings must be actively suppressed so as to be short-lived and incapable of leading the angry disciple into thoughts of reprisal toward the object of his anger.

- (2) Strong feelings of anger [*orge*] are not sinful when directed toward evil *things*. Saints must hate sin and be angry at its practice (Jude 23), just as Jesus exhibited such reactions to unrighteous deeds (John 2:13-17; Mark 3:5). Anger directed toward *people* must be handled differently and must not be allowed to fester into feelings of resentment and vindictiveness. Forgiveness, not revenge, is the accepted behavior toward which the *new man* must strive. “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt. 6:12).
- c. Giving in to the devil’s temptations (vs.27). “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). God always provides a way to escape from every temptation we may encounter. Surrender to sin without a fight demonstrates a lack of trust in the strength of God to make *us* strong enough to overcome sinful practices. “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Eph. 6:10).
- d. Stealing (vs. 28). Property rights have been important in almost every society, and taking what rightfully belongs to another person shows a deep disregard for the well-being of that person. Christianity is a religion based on giving, not on taking, “...for we are members of one another” (verse 25).
- e. Corrupt speech (vs. 29). Speech reflects the condition of a man’s heart (Luke 6:45). Corrupt speech is the vocal expression of the thoughts of an evil heart, and evil thoughts defile a person before God (Mark 7:21, 23).
- f. Grieving the Holy Spirit by noncompliance with His word. These disciples had been “sealed” [authenticated] by the special gifts of the Spirit (1:13). Disobedience would “grieve” [*lupeo*-- “to cause pain”] the Spirit because it would indicate that their seal of authenticity had been cancelled and removed. It is possible for Christians to fall from grace when they fall into sin ( Gal. 5:4; 1Cor. 10:12, etc.).
- g. Bitterness [*pikria*], wrath, anger, clamor [*krauge*-- “the tumult of controversy”], evil speaking, and malice [*kakia*-- “badness in quality”].
- (1) The water used to detect adultery was called “bitter” water because of its evil effects (Num. 5:18). Figuratively, bitterness here represents feelings that will poison the heart of their host and may erupt in sinful actions against those against whom the feelings are directed.
- (2) Clamor is inconsistent with the humility and submissiveness that should characterize the Lord’s disciples (Rom. 12:18; Titus 3:2). Tumult and controversy belong in the world, not in the church. When differences arise, they must be resolved within the framework of love and respect both for other disciples and for those outside the fellowship of the church (1Cor. 6:7).

(3) Malice is deep-seated and pervading ill-will toward some else. It seeks and waits for opportunities to do harm to others. A malicious person is “bad,” and contact with him is to be carefully guarded. His mean spirit usually brings harm and sorrow to its victims.

12. There were things that must be “put on.”

- a. Truth (vs. 25). Jesus is the Way, the *Truth*, and the Life (John 14:6). His disciples can be no less than truthful in *all* their dealings with others. The truth controls everything we *say* and everything we *do*.
- b. Honest labor (vs. 28). To other people Paul declared, “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (2Thes. 3:10). The first Christians “had all things common” and shared their possessions and goods among themselves (Acts 2:44,45; 4:34,35). However, this assistance was temporary, and “working with the hands” was regarded as the proper way for both saints and non-saints to support themselves and their families (1Tim. 5:8).
- c. Benevolence to the needy (vs. 28). Many pagan religions gave little or no emphasis to helping those in need. Christianity, however, raised the issue that “...whoever has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”(1John 3:17) Paul admonished the Galatians, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).
- d. Good speech (vs. 29). As noted before, words portray the condition of our hearts. Speech can be instrumental in building up [edifying] as well as in tearing down the human spirit. Great emphasis was placed on exhortation in the early church (2Tim. 4:2). Exhortation should be our daily concern as we associate with one another. That will prevent our being hardened by the “deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:13). It is even possible that exhortation was in some instances done in the assemblies with the aid of a special gift (Rom. 12:8). Positive speech can "give grace" to hearers either by impressing them with the good will of the speaker, thus enhancing relationships, or by encouraging them into more faithful service in the church, resulting in greater favor toward them from the Lord.
- e. Kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness (vs. 32).
  - (1) To be "kind" [*chrestos*] is to be “good, gracious.” Applied to *things*, it is “serviceable, pleasant,” and it would seem that pleasantness to other *people* should also characterize a disciple’s contact with other men.
  - (2) “Tenderhearted” is translated from *eusplanchnos*, “compassionate, of good heartedness.” It embodies attitudes of pity, concern, love, and other traits that motivate positive actions by a Christian to other people.
  - (3) “Forgiveness” often proves to be a very difficult attitude to exercise in certain circumstances. We can sometimes find several “reasons” why circumstances

**don't call for forgiveness of a real or imagined wrong. The overriding rule for the conscientious disciple is, "...forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." That thought always makes "forgiveness" serious business for the thoughtful Christian.**

1. The Christian must walk \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ with which he is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Our great challenge is to keep the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. List the *seven* “ones” on which unity and peace in the church must be based:  
(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_ (7) \_\_\_\_\_  
(4) \_\_\_\_\_
4. What were four spiritual gifts given for teaching disciples how to grow in the Lord?  
(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is meant by “till we all come to the unity of the faith”?
6. Every \_\_\_\_\_ must do its \_\_\_\_\_ if the \_\_\_\_\_ is to grow.
7. The Gentiles had their \_\_\_\_\_ darkened; they were \_\_\_\_\_ from God; they were \_\_\_\_\_ of truth; their hearts were \_\_\_\_\_; they were past \_\_\_\_\_; and they had given \_\_\_\_\_ over to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The Ephesians were urged to put off an \_\_\_\_\_ and put on a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The old man grows \_\_\_\_\_ according to the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. We speak \_\_\_\_\_ because we are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
11. What reason is given for working with our hands? What is another reason? (1Tim.5:8)
12. Good speech gives \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.
13. How does one “grieve the Holy Spirit”?
14. “Be kind to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ one another, just as God \_\_\_\_\_ forgave \_\_\_\_\_.”

Chapter Five

Verses 1-14-- THE CHURCH-- GOD'S RIGHTEOUS WALKERS [Section Nine]

1. Chapters 1-3 of this epistle established the central role of the church in heaven's "mystery" of salvation. Chapters 4-6 are intended to stress the serious obligations of its members at Ephesus and elsewhere to live their daily lives so as to enhance the world's appreciation of God's manifold wisdom shown in the church. Paul uses the connecting word "therefore" *ten* times in these three chapters to show the relationship between what God had done for the saved and what the saved now must do for God.
2. Another word prominent in these chapters is "walk" [live]. Paul's overall rule for redeemed people is to "walk *worthy* of the calling with which you were called" (4:1). More specific goals were added: (1) walk in good works (2:10); (2) do not walk as Gentiles do (4:17); (3) walk in love (5:2); (4) walk as children of light (5:8); walk as wise men (5:15). There are many aspects to consider about our responsibilities toward ourselves and toward others as we live from day to day.
3. Chapter 4 ended with the exhortation for Christians to "put off" bad behaviors and to "put on" practices that are fitting for the "new man." This will allow the human spirit to become more like the spirit of God. "Therefore you will be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). The reformation in our lives not only *follows* the path toward perfection that God has mapped out for us but also demonstrates that we are striving to *emulate* His perfect character, which is what every child does when he holds a good parent in high regard.

Walk in Love

1. Walk in love because love is a pervasive quality of God's essence: "God *is love*" (1John 4:8). That love was also reflected in the sacrifice of Jesus. "God so loved the world...(John 3:16). Both The Father and the Son are "God" [Divinity]. Love motivated the Father to plan and the Son to execute the offering of blood which "smelled" far sweeter to God than any oblation in the past ever could.
2. The sacrifice of Christ in the place of sinners otherwise doomed to an eternal death is by far the greatest expression of love ever witnessed in this world. Hodge comments:

Christ himself, therefore, is called the Lamb of God who bore our sins; his blood is the object of faith or ground of confidence, by which, as the blood of a sacrifice, we are redeemed, 1Pet. 1:18,19. He saves as a priest does, i.e. by a sacrifice. Every victim ever slain on Pagan altars was a declaration of the necessity for such a sacrifice; all the blood shed on Jewish altars was a prophecy of propitiation by the blood of Christ; and the whole New

Testament is the record of the Son of God offering himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This, according to the faith of the church universal, is the sum of the gospel-- the incarnation and death of the eternal Son of God as the propitiation for sin. There can, therefore, be no doubt as to the sense in which the apostle here declares Christ to be an offering and a sacrifice.

3. The Christian's walk is the expression of his love for God, love that responds to the goodness of God toward him. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). Furthermore, our love impels us to follow the Father's demands without reservation. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1John 5:3).
4. "Walking as the Gentiles walked" (4:17) was not "fitting for saints," who were now the spiritual Israel, a spiritual nation devoted to following Jehovah (Gal. 6:16). Things commonly done among spiritual "Gentiles" (1Pet. 2:12) cannot even be named [mentioned as remote possibilities] as things appropriate for saints who have been renewed in their lifestyle as well as in their relationship to heaven.
  - a. Fornication. This heinous sin had been strictly prohibited among the Jews (Exo. 20:14; 2Chron. 21:11). Pagan nations, however, not only tolerated its practice but often encouraged it in the temples devoted to their gods. The Christian's body is a sacred temple of the Holy Spirit, and it must not be defiled by indulging in such impure activity (1Cor. 6:18-20).
  - b. Uncleanness [*akatharsia*-- the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living]. This term embraces numerous practices contrary to the restrained, self-controlled conduct of saints (1Cor. 9:27; 6:12). It suggests extreme selfishness on the part of the unclean person who lives only for himself and is oblivious to any need for having his Creator in his life (Ro. 1:28).
  - c. Covetousness [*pleonexia*-- the desire to have more]. Paul labeled covetousness as *idolatry* in Col. 3:5 and in Eph. 5:5. It most often is connected with acquiring material things but can be more widely applied to fame, power, and other such intangible possessions. Regardless of the form it takes, covetousness becomes idolatry when it lessens one's focus on pleasing the Lord and concentrates instead on just pleasing oneself.
  - d. Filthiness [from *aischos*-- "shame, disgrace"]. Filthiness would seem to go beyond uncleanness and relate to the worst of depraved and despicable human behavior. It erupts from the sewers of corrupted spirits and drowns all sensitivity to basic decency and decorum. The pervading presence of this sin in our world society is a sad commentary on the quality of the human spirit generally and on the almost total disregard in many places for the Lord's headship over man. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).
  - e. Foolish talking ["silly talk"--RSV]. This is talk "proceeding from...weakness of mind or by folly"--Webster]. As used here, it obviously has a bad connotation. It offers nothing in support of anything worthwhile. It robs time which could be used for discussing spiritual matters or even important secular topics.

- f. Coarse jesting. The word *eutrapelia* [“easily turning”] originally denoted “wit, facetiousness, versatility.” It came to refer to quick repartee and social “small talk.” It can be a harmless pastime, but it can become an end in itself and can lead participants into pride, conceit, and other attitudes “which are not fitting.”
5. The new man will “put off” all the above-named sins and will fill his heart instead with *thanksgiving*. Thanksgiving is indicative of humility and dependency on the Lord by the thanks giver. It *is* totally fitting conduct for people who share in the great blessings provided by the “mystery” about which Paul is writing in this epistle.
  6. As the apostle had also written in an earlier letter to the church at Corinth (1Cor. 6: 9, 10), those who practice such sins as listed above have “no inheritance” in the kingdom of Christ and God. Heaven’s energies in arranging a rich inheritance will go for nothing and Jesus’ “purchased possession” will *never* be redeemed (Eph. 1:14).
  7. We cannot know who might have been trying to deceive the Ephesians into thinking that righteous walking was not crucial to salvation. We do know that some “religious” people such as the gnostics were of that persuasion during this general time period. Regardless of who they were, their words were “empty,” because God’s wrath would surely come upon *all* “sons of disobedience” inside the church and out (Rev. 21:8).
  8. No right-thinking Christian would allow himself to be seduced into participating in these evil practices . Furthermore, it would be wise to remember that “evil company corrupts good habits” (1Cor. 15:33). While one is trying to “walk worthy” of his calling in the Lord, he would do well to walk away from those whose company can influence him to walk *unworthy* of that calling.

#### Walk in Light

1. “Light” is truth and righteousness; “darkness” is ignorance, error, and ungodliness (John 6:35; Col. 1:13). As applied to Jesus, He is both the Light [source of truth] and the giver of that truth to others (John 1:9; 8:12). When we “walk in the light,” we conform to the principles of truth revealed to us in the gospel (2Tim. 1:10).
2. Christians are “light” in the Lord when they serve Him as “light bearers,” messengers of gospel truth to the lost. Their daily conduct must be consistent with their teaching. They must *practice* the truth they *preach* if truth is to make an impact on those who both hear what they say and see how they live (1Tim. 4:16).
3. The Holy Spirit was the Revelator of the “light” in which the saints should walk. The “fruit” [outcome] of putting His teaching into practice will be goodness [correctness toward other men], righteousness [correctness toward God], and truth [correctness toward the gospel]. A disciple will exhibit *good morals, genuine piety, and sound doctrine* in his daily conduct and will prove [*dokimazo*-- “to test” with the expectation of approving] by observable criteria in his life that God indeed accepts and blesses those who manifest such behavior.
4. Works of darkness also produce fruit in men’s lives, but that fruit is undesirable for

people who are trying to walk in the light. So, children of light will: (1) avoid fellowship [participation] in such things and, (2) “expose” [*elencho*-- “convict”] them as the soul-damning practices that they are.

5. The “unfruitful works of darkness” were the deeds that had defined the lives of the Ephesian Christians when they once walked as the “rest of the Gentiles” were still walking (4:17). Some of these acts were so despised by society in general that they were often done in secret rather than openly. But even the worst of them would be exposed and condemned as unworthy of decent men when seen in the light of truth. How grateful these disciples should be that they had escaped from such ruinous activities!
6. Paul’s contention is that there is no longer any excuse for men to live in the darkness of sin. Gospel truth is now available by which men can discern between good and evil. Evil will be exposed in its real nature if men will only let the light of truth shine on it. In support of this position, the apostle inserts a statement which some suppose originated in Isaiah 60:1-5 and others believe was lifted from a song or from some piece of literature. Regardless of its origin, Paul utilizes the quotation to urge the spiritually asleep [dead] to allow the gospel to show them exactly where they stand with the Lord and to make needed adjustments to their lifestyles.

#### Walk in Wisdom

1. Continuing his theme of “walking worthy of their calling,” Paul urges the disciples to walk “circumspectly” [*akribos*-- “accurately”; carefully, looking around] as *wise* men and not as *fools* [*asophos*-- “unwise”]. Spiritual wisdom is “seeing things as God sees them,” and foolishness is “seeing things as man sees them.”
2. The Christian must walk:
  - a. Accurately-- for, “Whosoever goeth onward [strays from the charted path] and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God...” (2John 9--ASV);
  - b. Carefully-- for, “...let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Cor.10:12);
  - c. Looking about-- for, “...the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1Pet. 5:8);
  - d. In wisdom-- for, “...after you have known God, or rather are known by God...” (Gal. 4:9). God approves of those who approve of Him, and those who respect His Person will also respect His laws (1John 2:4).
3. The use of opportunity is a key factor in “wise” walking. Opportune “time” must be redeemed [used; bought back] because man’s worldly environment [“days”] is *evil* [*poneros*- “toilsome, painful”] and will distract unwise walkers from their true destination.
4. The only way men can be wise [see as God sees] is to understand God’s will. His view of things is divulged only in His revelation (1Cor. 2:11-13). Those who refuse to walk in His wisdom will walk in their own wisdom, which is a spiritually fatal course of

action. “It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23).

5. The Christian chooses to be “filled with the Spirit,” because conforming to the Spirit’s precepts will “build him up” and strengthen him in the “inner man” (Acts 20:32; Eph. 3:16). Conversely, being “drunk with wine” will result in “dissipation” [KJV-- “excess”; ASV-- “riot”; RSV, Conf.--“debauchery”]. These varied translations are from *asotia*-- “prodigality, a wastefulness, profligacy.” All suggest behaviors contrary to the Christian life. They tear down one’s character, whereas behaviors directed by the Spirit build it up. The “prodigal” son wasted his possessions with prodigal [riotous] living” (Luke 15:13). More wasted lives, wasted money, wasted relationships, and wasted opportunities have been attributed to the excessive use of alcohol than to any other thing. The *excessive use* of alcohol will never become a problem for people wise enough never to allow *any use of it at all* into their lives!
6. Being “filled with the Spirit” always results in good fruit. The apostle lists three things that give evidence that the Christian is walking worthy of his calling.
  - a. A mind filled with thoughts of God (verse 19). Song is an emotional expression of the mind’s reflection on spiritual matters, and it impresses the mind with those reflections in a way unique to itself. This doubtless accounts for God’s inclusion of singing as an integral part of the church’s public worship. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs provide not only an effective outlet for expressing thoughts otherwise difficult to verbalize but also, at the same time, serve as an exercise to uplift the soul and strengthen it in a way that nothing else can.
    - (1) Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are the only types of songs that will accomplish these desirable outcomes.
    - (2) Accompanying the spiritual thoughts of the specified kinds of songs with the melody produced within a worshipful heart adds significantly to the joy and uplift of singers in a way that instrumental accompaniments cannot.
    - (3) The addition of pianos, organs, horns, and other devices to the song service of a congregation not only is totally without scriptural authority but also obstructs the intended edification of worshippers in public worship.
    - (4) David Lipscomb offers a helpful comment on instruments of music in worship:
 

Some claim that *psallo* carries with it the idea of a mechanical instrumental accompaniment, but if the word in the New Testament means to sing with a mechanical instrument, it is not only allowable but *obligatory to it*. I give a general definition of the word: “(1) to touch, feel, stir, or move by touching, *especially*: to pull, twitch or twang with the fingers, instead of the plectrum.” Beyond doubt it means the vibration of a string or cord that produces a sound-- and refers to the music of stringed instruments. It does not originally mean a hymn sung to the music of a stringed instrument, but to the twanging or vibration of the cord that makes the music. No one who has examined the subject doubts that this is the original meaning and applies to all sounds and music made by the vibration of the cords of the instrument. As such it embraces the speaking organs of the human voice as much as the harp.

The human voice is the most complicated, delicate, and perfect musical instrument

known to man. It is the perfection of the Maker's handiwork as a musical instrument, and is capable of more musical combinations and harmonies far sweeter and more varied than any and all instruments of human make, even than those "invented by David." All the varied sounds and all the multiplicity of intonations of the human voice are made by the vocal cords within the throat and mouth. The word *psallo* then would, and did from the beginning, embrace the music of the voice as well as that made by stringed instruments of man's invention. The voice is a stringed instrument of God's make. Nor is it singular that as the use of the voice was so much more common and universal than that of any other instrument, the word should come to be applied exclusively to the music made by the voice, unless it was specifically said to be some other instrument. This is what did come to pass. Especially this was true of the use of the word among the Jews, who in their later period and disaster and sorrow dropped the use of the instrument, but continued to sing the same songs that had been sung in former days to the accompaniment of the harp and other instruments. They were still psalms when sung without the instrumental accompaniment. When David admonished them to praise God with the harp, he did not trust the word *psallo* to designate and declare it. For *psallo* then referred as well to the singing without the instrument as with it. Hence it was necessary to connect with *psallo* the instrument used to determine what instrument accompanied the singing or whether any was used save the human voice. So the word unqualified in New Testament times came to mean only to sing.

- b. **A heart filled with thanksgiving for God's blessings** (verse 20). Each Christian is the recipient of "every spiritual blessing" in his relationship to Christ (1:3). That is the "heavenly place" which he enjoys in God's plan. Heaven's provisions for the physical body are available to everyone (Matt. 5:45), but blessings provided for the *soul* are reserved for the enjoyment and prosperity of citizens in Christ's kingdom. We must always be grateful for *all* these things made possible for us by the "name" of Christ [resting on His nature and authority as God the Son].
- c. **A will subjected to God's will**. It is the fervent desire of the Godhead that all disciples be *one* in thought and action (John 17:21). This unity demands that we regard all brothers and sisters in Christ as equals and as saints cleansed from sin on the same terms as ourselves. There are no elite among church members, and our treatment of one another must demonstrate that fact. This is best done by "submitting to one another in the fear of [respect for] God [Christ]."

#### Verses 22-33-- THE CHURCH-- GOD'S SUBMISSIVE SERVANTS (1) [Section Ten]

Paul's general admonition for the Ephesians to "submit to one another" applies to numerous situations in the life of Christians. Beginning in this section, the apostle specifies some of the relationships in which a submissive spirit should be exhibited.

##### Husbands and Wives

1. Marriage involves a great majority of church members, and it is a relationship in which participants can show to the world a walk either *worthy* or *unworthy* of their calling in the Lord. The conduct of married Christians toward each other impacts not only their personal reputations among observers of their marriage but also, represent-

actively, the reputation of the church in general and of their local congregation in particular. This reality adds to the seriousness of spouses being submissive to each other in their relationship.

2. God gave the woman to her husband as a “helper” to him (Gen. 2:18) and gave him rule over her soon after their sin in Eden (Gen. 3:16). Paul associated man’s authority with the circumstances of the transgression (1Tim. 2:12-14). The “chain of command” in the human family is God’s work and must be regarded as such. This fact necessitates that wives “submit themselves” to the oversight of their husbands, knowing that by doing so they are submitting themselves to the Lord who organized the family in this way.
3. Paul uses his discussion of mutual submission in human relationships as a way to expand his previous lessons about the sanctity of the spiritual bond that exists between Christ and His church. Proper behavior of wives and children toward husbands and fathers can illustrate how members of the spiritual body [the church] should behave toward Jesus Christ, the head of their spiritual family.
4. In his “double lesson,” Paul makes *six* important points:
  - a. The husband is head over the wife in the human family;
  - b. Christ is head over the church in the spiritual family;
  - c. The wife must submit to the rule of the husband in the human family in all things;
  - d. The church must submit to the rule of Christ over the church in all things;
  - e. The reason for the church submitting to Christ: He is its Savior [provider of its every spiritual need];
  - f. The reason for wives submitting to husbands: husbands are “saviors” of their wives [providers of all their physical needs].
5. Another “double lesson” involves the “submission” of husbands to wives. Husbands should approach the exercise of their *authority* in the human family with the same *emotional submissiveness* that characterizes Jesus as He rules over His spiritual family. Love is the prime motivation for any action taken by the husband as head of his family unit, just as love moves Jesus to direct us only in ways that are for our spiritual good (1John 4:9).
  - a. In this way, husbands submit their own needs to those of other family members [wives in particular] as he “gives” himself to them;
  - b. Similarly, Jesus “gave” Himself in life and in death to achieve what was good for His church (Phil. 2:5-8);
  - c. Jesus’ totally unselfish behavior toward the church gives us the pattern for the unselfish exercise of power by husbands toward their families [wives in particular].
6. Jesus’ purpose in “choosing” the saved was that they might be “holy and without blame” (1:4). In pursuit of that goal, He made *three* things possible for the church.
  - a. He *sanctified* it. “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated

- us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13). Thus the church has been “set apart” [sanctified] to serve Him rather than to serve Satan.
- b. He *cleansed* it. The sinful conduct displayed by sinners defiles them before God (Matt. 15:19,20). Only when we have been spiritually cleansed by Jesus’ blood are we fit for the kingdom of God and for a relationship with Christ (1John 1:7). The blood cleanses sinners when they are “washed” with water by [according to] the word of God. A clear case in point is the conversion [cleansing] of Paul himself. As Saul, a fervent persecutor of the early church, he had asked about cleansing-- “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6) Christ’s answer was, “Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away your sins*, calling on the name of the Lord”(Acts 22:16).
  - c. He *made it glorious* [*endoxos*-- “splendid, glorious”]. Christ’s works on earth were called “glorious” (Luke 13:17). The church in its identity as a people cleansed from all sin, without “spot or wrinkle,” and “holy and without blemish,” is one of Jesus’ most glorious works!
7. “So”-- this expression signifies a conclusion from what has already been said. Paul’s lesson about the relationship between husband and wife as it parallels the bond between Christ and the church has established these truths:
    - a. Christ is head of the church; the husband is head of his wife;
    - b. Christ is the Savior of His body; the husband is the “savior” of his wife [implied];
    - c. The church is subject to its Head; the wife is subject to her head;
    - d. Christ rules over the church by love; the husband rules over his wife by love;
    - e. Christ gave Himself for the good of the church; husbands give themselves for the good of their wives;
    - d. Christ provided for the spiritual needs of the church; a husband provides for physical and emotional needs of his wife;
    - e. Christ and the church illustrate the mutual submissiveness that should exist between every husband and wife.
  8. The conclusion Paul draws from these truths is that husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies. The church is Christ’s body (verse 23), and the wife is the husband’s “body.” Marriage makes “*one* person” from *two* people (Gen. 2:24). They are one as Jesus and His church are one , as the disciples are one as a body, and as the Son and the Father are one in every thought, purpose, and action (John 17:21). The Lord loved *His* body, the church, and each husband should love *his* body, his wife.
  9. A simple lesson that some husbands never learn: love directed toward a wife by her husband is invariably returned to him in the form of love, devotion, and submission from his wife.
  10. Husbands are far better off in every way when they treat their wives as they should. “Nourishing” [*trepho*-- “to rear, feed out of”] and “cherishing” [*thalpo*-- “to keep warm”] them is a very good investment! Every worthwhile condition in a man’s life

is enhanced by the help of a good and faithful wife. Similarly, every spiritual blessing (1:3) that Christ predestined for the saved (1:5) is enjoyed in their membership and participation together in the church.

**11. Charles Hodge offers a good perspective on husband-love:**

Conjugal love, therefore, is as much a dictate of nature as self-love; and it is just as unnatural for a man to hate his wife, as it would be for him to hate himself, or his own body.

A man may have a body which does not altogether suit him. He may wish it were handsomer, healthier, stronger, or more active. Still, it is *his* body, it is himself; and he nourisheth it and cherishes it as tenderly as though it were the best and loveliest man ever had. So a man may have a wife whom he could wish to be better, or more beautiful, or more agreeable; still, she is his wife, and by the constitution of nature and ordinance of God, a part of himself.

In neglecting or ill-using her he violates the laws of nature as well as the law of God. It is thus Paul presents the matter. If the husband and wife are one flesh, the husband must love his wife, “*for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.*”

- 12. The unity between Christ and His church is the primary cause for which He heaps bountiful gifts upon the redeemed. And so, as Paul cites from Genesis 2:24, since the same unity exists between a husband and his wife, it should also be the reason for him to love her and treat her well.**
- 13. The “great mystery” is likely *not* the mutual submissiveness in a marriage that Paul has been discussing. Common sense and human experience should make that relationship fairly easy to understand. This “great mystery” is probably the same one that Paul has previously mentioned several times: the bond that exists between Christ and His church. That is a spiritual bond which is difficult for worldly people to comprehend (1Cor. 2:14,15). It needs God’s revelation to bring us adequate understanding, and that is what Ephesians is all about.**
- 14. Even though our understanding of everything else is subordinate to our perception of Paul’s lessons on Christ and the church, the apostle initially had set out in this passage to teach the saints at Ephesus the importance of submission in a successful marriage. But he doesn’t want the significance of his lessons about husbands and wives to be lost because of the even greater importance of his lessons about Christ and the church. And so, he closes the passage with a final reminder about the love and respect that must characterize any marriage acceptable to God.**

1. List *three* ways in which Christians are told to “walk” in this chapter:  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_
2. List *six* things that are described as “not fitting” for saints to do:  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (d) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_ (e) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_ (f) \_\_\_\_\_
3. We must not be deceived by \_\_\_\_\_, because God’s \_\_\_\_\_ will be upon every \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Saved people were once \_\_\_\_\_ but now are \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ are the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit and prove what is \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord.
6. How are Christians instructed to behave toward “unfruitful works of darkness”?  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_
7. We should walk \_\_\_\_\_, not as \_\_\_\_\_ but as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ the time, because the \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_.
8. With what are we to be “filled”? With what are we not to be filled?  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_
9. What kinds of songs are appropriate in worship as we \_\_\_\_\_ and make \_\_\_\_\_ in our \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord?  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Disciples must \_\_\_\_\_ to one another in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Wives are \_\_\_\_\_ to their \_\_\_\_\_ just as the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Husbands love their \_\_\_\_\_ as their own \_\_\_\_\_; the man who loves his \_\_\_\_\_ loves \_\_\_\_\_.
13. “This is a great \_\_\_\_\_, but I speak concerning \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”  
(50)

Chapter Six

Verses 1-9-- THE CHURCH-- GOD'S SUBMISSIVE SERVANTS (2) [Section 11]

In chapter five, verse 21, Paul told the Ephesians that “submitting to one another” was a necessary part of their walking in wisdom as children of God. In applying that principle, he urged wives to be in subjection to their husbands and husbands to love their wives enough to be willing to subject their own desires to those of the wives. He used Christ and His church to illustrate both relationships.

Now, the apostle will extend his application to other relationships commonly shared among members of the early church: parents and children; master and servants.

Parents and Children

1. The parent/child relationship is first addressed. Paul speaks directly to “children” about their obligation to submit themselves to their parents. This would indicate that his remarks are pointed toward older children who are capable of understanding his injunction of obedience and of making a conscious effort to comply. Further, the obedience of these children must be “in the Lord,” which suggests that religious motivations are involved in their submission. The basic emphasis might even be on children who are old enough to have become Christians.
2. While “in the Lord” might be especially meaningful to older children, the same expression is also important when directed toward parents of younger children. Christian fathers and mothers understand the qualities God wants in their children at maturity. All child-rearing should be done with those goals in mind and done in a way that will promote their eventual attainment by the children.
3. It is right for parents to be in charge and for children to be in submission. Human experience demonstrates that this arrangement is necessary because of the very nature of the relationship. Under normal circumstances, parents are better equipped for decision-making than children. Moreover, it is right for children to obey parents because that is the will of the Lord. Where religious principles are involved, other reasons for child submission may be *good*, but it is *good and right* because *God said so!*
4. This delegation of control to parents was not a new arrangement. Family units from the very beginning functioned under the supervision of fathers and mothers. When the Law was given to Israel, the obligation of children to obey their parents was made clear. From the Old Testament record Paul quoted the fifth Commandment, likely referring to the law in Deuteronomy 5:16 rather than to the original statement in Exodus 20. While Jews were well-acquainted with the importance of parent-child relationships under the Law, Gentiles might be impressed to know that God had seen fit

to include this principle of submission as one of ten most fundamental guidelines [Ten Commandments] for righteous living.

5. God's appointments have always afforded both privileges and responsibilities to their recipients. Privileges must not be exercised without their corresponding restraints of responsibility. The rule of governmental officers over the populace must be done with fairness under the law (Rom. 13:3,4); elders must rule over their flock with consideration for the feelings and opinions of others (1Pet. 5:3). And so must fathers be very careful as they exercise the power given to them over the family unit.
6. Wives much more willingly submit to their husbands if they feel loved by them. Children will be much more cooperative and submissive to parents when they believe that decisions that concern them are made with their good in mind. Fathers must never try to control other family members for the sake of control but rather to try to keep all members of the family in the best possible circumstances.
7. Fathers have two serious obligations to their children that will, (1) promote a harmonious relationship between children and their parents and, (2) will greatly enhance the prospect for a harmonious relationship between children and God:
  - a. Fathers [and mothers] **must not** "provoke" [*parorgizo*-- "to arouse to wrath"] their children. This obviously does not prevent parents from taking any action necessary to discipline a child appropriately, whether or not their action causes anger in the child. It is deliberate antagonizing and unreasonable restraints placed upon children that the apostle seems to forbid. These behaviors will likely arouse wrath in the best of children and generate resentment and ill will that may last forever.
  - b. Parents must "bring up" their children in the "training" [*paideia*-- "the training of a child, including instruction"] and "admonition" [*nouthesia*-- "a putting in mind"] of the Lord. W.E. Vine suggests that these words, though similar, may be used differently. *Nouthesia* stresses training by *words*, whether encouraging or reproving words, while *paideia* is concerned more with *acts*. This distinction encourages the use of both mental and physical discipline by parents concerned with guiding their children into obedience to themselves and to God.
  - c. Of course, training "in the Lord" must be made appropriate to the age and understanding of a child. Sound judgment is needed in every decision parents make in helping both younger and older children to develop character that is Christ-like.

#### Masters and Servants

1. "Servants" as addressed here were slaves, not just hired servants. Although *doulos* sometimes indicated servants not under bondage, it usually referred to men who were in servitude to someone else. Verse 8 seems to make it clear that these were slaves and not freemen.
2. Slavery as an institution of first-century society posed a unique problem for slaves and masters. Many slaves and masters were exposed to the gospel, and many from both

groups were obedient to gospel commands and were saved and added to the Lord's church. Paul and other inspired teachers spoke plainly about this new relationship in Christ. To the Galatians Paul had declared, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither *slave* nor *free*, there is neither male nor female; for you are *all one* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). But this raised new questions in the churches: "Now that God has placed both slaves and their masters on the same *spiritual* level, does that mean that slaves no longer must obey their masters? Does *spiritual freedom* also give slaves freedom from their *physical slavery*?"

3. There is nothing in New Testament teaching that encouraged the cancellation of any personal relationships between slaves and masters, nor is there any indication that one of the goals of gospel preaching was to abolish slavery as an institution. Onesimus' conversion removed none of his obligations as Philemon's slave, but instead it *added* responsibilities to their relationship that neither had before (Phil. 10-17). So with all such persons, conversion changed *attitudes* but not *physical relationships*.
4. Embedded in the gospel of Christ are principles of love and kindness that would, in time, diminish one man's desire to control the life of another man. Slavery cannot long exist under the influence of gospel principles that promote the self-worth of every individual and the equality of all men. Indeed, slavery has disappeared from every place where the gospel has gone and where ignorance and prejudice have been replaced by truth and understanding among men.
5. New "rules" were now in place to regulate how Christian masters and Christian slaves treated one another. Christ expected them to become better slaves and better masters as they all tried to satisfy His expectations. Better behavior must be demonstrated by Christian masters whether or not their slaves were Christians. Likewise, Christian slaves must respond better to owners who were brethren in Christ as well as to those who were not.
6. Slaves must be obedient [submissive] to their masters:
  - a. Not as men-pleasers, but as Christ-pleasers, because they *were also* His servants;
  - b. Not giving eyeservice, because Christ, their real Master, always kept His "all-seeing eye" on them whether or not their masters in the flesh were present;
  - c. With "fear and trembling," because their Heavenly Master had set high standards for their service both to Him and to their owners.
    - (1) "Fear and trembling" [*phobos* and *tromos*] both suggest "reverential fear," a "wholesome dread of displeasing Him" [Vine].
    - (2) This is a term used several times in Paul's writings:
      - (a) Referring to his own preaching at Corinth (1Cor. 2:3);
      - (b) Describing the Corinthians' reception of Titus (2Cor. 7:15);
      - (c) Citing the seriousness of working out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12).
  - d. With a heartfelt desire to do God's will as they submit to man's will;
  - e. With a wholesome attitude toward the service they perform for both God and man.

7. Paul's focus in this passage is on good attitudes and good service on the part of owners, slaves, or freemen who were all one in Christ. Anything else would be unthinkable by those who sincerely wanted to go to heaven. To all three classes his warning was the same: *Your good behavior will be richly rewarded by the Lord, and [implied] bad behavior will forfeit your race toward eternal life.*
8. Lest slave owners and employers of freemen should fail to make changes in their own behavior, Paul particularizes what God expects of them:
  - a. Do your part in maintaining good relationships with those subject to you, just as you rightly expect them to do their part;
  - b. Give up threatening actions intended to instill dread in the hearts of servants;
  - c. Remember always that you have a heavenly Master by whom you wish to be well treated. And never forget that Jesus declared, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). A non-partial Jesus will judge both servants and masters by the same standard of righteous conduct demanded in His gospel (2Cor. 5:10).
9. This section of Ephesians [5:21-6:9] provides us with a wide-reaching treatment of the principle of mutual submission that is to be practiced in the church. It covers the fundamental relationships of every society: husbands and wives; parents and children; masters [or employers] and slaves [or employees]. "Submitting to one another in the fear of God" was a precept crucial to the unity and harmony of God's people in the first century, and it remains in our day as one of the essentials for the success of the Lord's people.

Verses 10-20-- THE CHURCH-- GOD'S SECURE SAINTS [Section Twelve]

1. Peter warns in his first epistle, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1Pet. 5:8). Many of us vastly underestimate the strength, cunning, and perseverance of Satan:
  - a. He is the prince [ruler] of the demons (Matt. 9:34);
  - b. He is the prince [ruler] of this world (John 14:30; 16:11);
  - c. He is the prince of the power of the air and the spirit that motivates the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2);
  - d. He is a murderer and a liar (John 8:44) and sinned from the beginning (1John 3:8);
  - e. He transforms himself into an angel of light; he has servants who transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (2Cor. 11:14,15).
  - f. He overcame Judas (Luke 22:3,4) and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3);
  - g. He hinders God's people in their efforts to serve the Lord (1Thes. 2:18).
2. Understanding the strength of the devil, we can also understand the need for Christians to be strong:
  - a. "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (1Cor. 16:13);
  - b. "...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2Tim. 2:1);

- c. "...Christ Jesus...perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you" (1Pet. 5:10);
  - d. "...that He would grant you...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16).
3. Paul's directive to the Ephesians to "be strong" would ask too much of them if help were not available to make compliance possible. Satan no doubt has asked for the soul of *every* child of God, as he did for Peter, to "sift him as wheat" (Luke 22:31). Without the intercession of Jesus and the spiritual strength we can receive from Him, we are sure to fall before the devil's onslaughts of temptation and opposition.
  4. In light of the inequalities between Satan's capabilities and our own, Paul's final admonition to the Ephesian saints is, "Be strong *in the Lord* and in the power of *His might*."
  5. Although our personal defenses against the "wiles" of the devil are inadequate to resist him successfully, there are several actions that can be taken to assure a victorious opposition to his attacks against our faith.
    - a. *Put on the whole armor of God* (verse 11). Our personal armor of worldly attainment, fortune or fame is totally useless in this battle for our souls. Only God's armor is designed to vanquish our great foe. But the whole armor must be utilized. Each piece is vital to our safety, and even one missing piece will make us vulnerable to loss and spiritual death.
      - (1) We must gird our waists with *truth*. The long robes worn in Paul's time would be cumbersome and make strenuous activity and movement difficult. Belts tightened around the waist would enable a person to accomplish his task unhindered. Without *truth* "holding together" all that we do in the Lord's work, any task is pointless. Doctrinal error and human opinion get in the way of success. Like physical Israel, when we perform religious service without the authority of truth [God's word--John 17:17], we only "seek to establish our own righteousness, and have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Ro. 10:3).
      - (2) We must put on the *breastplate of righteousness*. The breastplate of the soldier protected his vital organs. Without it, he would quickly succumb to the weapons of the enemy. The Christian's breastplate is not his *own* exemplary life but rather the righteousness [state of "being right"] that is his through his faith in Jesus (Phil. 3:9). It is synonymous with his salvation, and by it he is assured that sacrifices and hardships suffered for Christ are gladly borne in exchange for the "glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).
      - (3) We must have our feet shod with the *preparation of the gospel of peace*. It is somewhat strange to find warfare and peace associated as they are in this passage. Still, the battle must be won before peace can be enjoyed. A warrior's footwear was important to his efficiency. One slip before a foe could bring an instant death. Both extensive and intensive preparation must precede combat.

No amount of study and meditation will overly prepare us to meet those who stand in the way of victory. “Study to show thyself approved unto God” (2Tim. 2:15-- KJV).

- (4) We must cover ourselves with the *shield of faith*. The large door-like shields of Roman soldiers provided their greatest protection from harm in battle. Not only did they repel the close up thrusts of enemy weaponry but also they were effective in defending against the assaults of more distantly-launched missiles such as hurled spears and machine-propelled stones. There is some question among scholars about whether or not Roman shields were actually able to “quench the fiery darts” shot into them, and Paul’s “shield” may be better than those. Our faith surely *will* “put out” Satan’s darts!

These large shields were often held close together by large numbers of men in a military formation called a *phalanx*. This tactic could withstand attacks by large numbers of the enemy. Perhaps there is an allusion here to the “mutual faith” (Rom. 1:12) of the Ephesian congregation that provided added strength to the individual faith of each member.

- (5) We must wear the *helmet of salvation*. This is probably the “helmet of the hope of salvation” (1Thes. 5:8). Its function is much like that of the breastplate of righteousness. Hope is so vital to man’s pursuit of eternal life that Paul declared, “For we were *saved* in this hope...” (Rom. 8:24). Note that in hope:
- a. We expect to become heirs of eternal life (Titus 3:7);
  - b. We maintain love for Christ and for one another (Col. 1:5);
  - c. We emulate Jesus in our daily lives (Col. 1:27);
  - d. We anchor our faith amid the tossing waves of unbelief (Heb. 6:19).
- (6) We must take the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God. The work of the faithful and courageous soldier in the army of the Lord is both *defensive* and *offensive*. The previously-mentioned items of armor needed in the battle with Satan were all designed to defend the Christian and his faith. The word of God, however, is useful not only for the defense of truth against error but also for offense in attacking the strongholds of Satan and destroying everything that would hinder lost men from obedience to the gospel. Only the truth can set men free from themselves and from their sins (John 8:32). Without the gospel, no man can be saved (Rom. 1:16,17). Disciples are to be aggressive in handling the *sword of the Spirit*. We are commissioned to *go* and *take* the truth *to* all the world (Mark 16:15,16), not wait for the world to come to us in search of the truth.
- b. *Wrestle against the spiritual hosts of wickedness* (verse12). The Christian armor is not only to be put on but also must be used in combat with Satan’s forces. Our armor is substantial because our enemy is powerful:

- (1) Our struggle is not confined to physical foes. But since we *do* confront numerous flesh-and-blood enemies of the truth, Paul apparently means, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood [only].” But our warfare is much more dangerous and difficult because of hidden and sinister forces that manipulate the opponents we *can* see;
- (2) These adversaries of the truth are *spiritual, numerous, wicked, and situated in the heavenly “places”*:
  - (a) *Spiritual*: Our armor is spiritual because our most menacing enemies are spiritual. The Sadducees with whom Jesus had so much trouble did not believe in spirits or the spiritual world. The Pharisees accepted the reality of such things but perverted that reality to accommodate their own twisted religious system (Matt. 9:34; cf. Josephus). Moreover, they denied that Jesus had any control over the world of spirits and angels (Matt. 12:24);
  - (b) *Numerous*: “Hosts” is supplied to the text but is needed for the sense of the thought. The same term appears in Luke 2:13 of the “heavenly host” [*stratia*-- “an army”] which glorified God at the birth of Jesus. The *magnitude* of our task is measured in part by the *multitude* dedicated to destroy our spiritual lives;
  - (c) *Wicked*. Satan [Beelzebub] was called the “prince of demons” and Jesus seems to have endorsed that concept (Mark 3:22,23). Peter spoke of angels who sinned and had been cast into hell and bound in “chains of darkness” (2Pet. 2:4). Jude also referenced angels who left their proper place and are held for the final judgment (Jude 6). It is clear that not all spiritual beings are of good character or concerned with the well-being of humans;
  - (d) *Heavenly places*: This is the fifth time this term appears in the Ephesian letter. [See also: 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10.] “Places” is supplied in all instances to complete the idea of location. Most commentators identify the heavenly or spiritual realms as the “places” where evil spirits and angels reside and from which they function in the affairs of men on earth. This possibly can be connected with Paul’s reference to the devil as the “prince of the power of the *air*” (Eph. 2:2).

An alternate insertion into the text after “heavenly” [*epouranios*-- “what pertains to, or is in, heaven-- Vine] could be “plan” or “places in God’s plan.” The book focuses on the “mystery” [plan] revealed through the gospel, and its various components all have their “place” or part in that plan. [See the chart at the end of this section.] Thus:

- (aa) Eph. 1:3-- Provision of spiritual blessings is part of the “mystery.”  
The plan would shower the saved with spiritual blessings;
- (bb) Eph. 1:20-- The resurrection and exaltation of Jesus are vital parts of God’s plan to redeem all men. The plan would rest upon

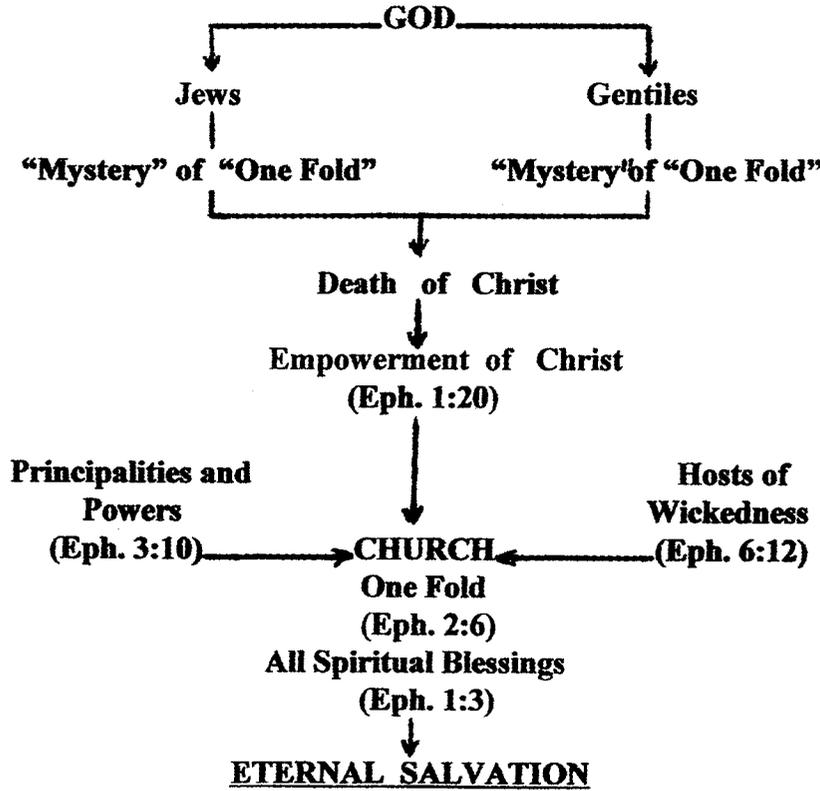
- the ultimate expression of the power of God (Rom.1:4);
- (cc) Eph. 2:6-- The plan called for Jews and Gentiles “sitting together” in one church. The plan would bring unity and peace to people who could never enjoy such things otherwise;
  - (dd) Eph. 3:10-- Principalities and powers, in the heavens or on earth, would recognize God’s wisdom, displayed in the structure of the church and in the lives of its members, as superior to their own. The plan would glorify its Architect;
  - (ee) Eph. 6:12-- God could have removed all the powers of wickedness, in the heavens or on the earth, from their positions of strength against the church. His “mystery,” however, retained their places as opponents of the saved. Their opposition serves to keep us focused and spiritually strong as we are forced to wage a never-ending conflict against these “spiritual hosts of wickedness.” The plan would enhance spiritual health through exercise against sin;
- c. *Stand* (verse 13). Having prepared themselves for battle with the forces of darkness, soldiers of Christ must use their armor to remain strong in faith and zealous in service in the face of whatever obstacles the enemy may throw against them. Each one must enter actively into combat and not merely watch from afar while others carry on the fight. “Standing” is frequently urged upon the redeemed (e.g., 1Cor. 16:13; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27, etc.]. Donning the armor of God to prepare for warfare is futile if our preparation doesn’t lead us to victory;
  - d. *Pray always* (verse 18). “Pray without ceasing” (1Thes. 5:17) is God’s formula for our success in service to the Lord. Prayer must be infused into every effort much as fuel must be poured into an automobile engine. God becomes involved when we include Him in what we try to do. We are defeated even before the fight begins when we attempt to wage war with Satan by ourselves. Prayer [*proseuchomai*] and supplication [*deesis*] also involve the Holy Spirit, who takes our requests to the throne of God (Rom. 8:26). “Prayer” is likely the more comprehensive term [including both praise and petition], and “supplication” may refer to specific requests for particular blessings;
  - e. *Be watchful and persevere* (verse 18). Vigilance is essential to perseverance. We must watch for temptations, false teaching and false teachers, evil companions, and for many other dangers to our faith and faithfulness. “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Cor. 10:12);
  - f. *Pray for all the saints* (verse 18). The church is a body (Eph. 1:22,23) and each part is dependent on the others (1Cor. 12:12-27). What is good for one is good for all, and the prosperity of one member enhances the prosperity of every other member. Praying for “all the saints” should be our constant practice.

- (1) Paul was always anxious to have prayers raised in his behalf. This was especially true now that he was being held in a Roman prison.**
  - (2) Yet, it was not for release from his bonds or for any other personal benefit that the Ephesian saints should pray. His request instead was that he might be permitted to continue to preach the gospel and that he would be bold when he preached. But that would require unusual courage in his circumstances, and God's strength would be essential to accomplishing his goal.**
  - (3) Although in chains, the apostle was still an ambassador [*presbia*-- "age, eldership, rank"] with Christ's authority to represent Him to lost men and to "negotiate" [dictate] His terms of salvation. As an official agent of Jesus, his responsibilities were great, and his unwavering purpose was to be faithful to the trust placed in him (Phil. 3:12).**
- 6. Tychicus, a "beloved and faithful minister in the Lord," was to bear the epistle to the church at Ephesus from Rome [or from Caesarea, as some suppose]. Tychicus was spoken of as a "fellow servant in the Lord" and is also mentioned in Acts 20:4 as a companion of Paul and others. In 2Timothy 4:12, Paul states that Tychicus had been sent to Ephesus, and Titus 3:12 raises the prospect that he might be used as a messenger to Titus at Crete.**
  - 7. Tychicus would also be able to give a personal report of Paul's circumstances as he was being held prisoner by Rome. His report, it seems, would be positive and would give comfort to the Ephesian brethren.**
  - 8. Paul's closing was typical and wished for peace, love, faith, and grace to be God's bounty to them as they continued to display love and sincere commitment to Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

1. This chapter deals with relationships between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; and between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What was the “first commandment with [a] promise”? Where was it promised [ref.]?
3. Parents must not \_\_\_\_\_ their children to \_\_\_\_\_ but bring them up in the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Service should be given with \_\_\_\_\_ as servants of the \_\_\_\_\_ and not of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Masters should give up \_\_\_\_\_, for they have a \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Christians are to be \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ and in the strength of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. What four kinds of enemies do Christians “wrestle” against?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The Lord’s soldiers can stand strong by using the “whole armor of God.” What is it?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. \_\_\_\_\_
9. What weapon are we provided with which to take the offensive against Satan?
10. We must also \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ for all the \_\_\_\_\_ with all \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Paul desired to continue to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ and to be \_\_\_\_\_ in his preaching as Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ was to be Paul’s messenger to carry the letter to Ephesus from his prison cell in \_\_\_\_\_.

“HEAVENLY PLACES IN THE GREAT MYSTERY”



-oO-oOo-Oo-

1. God dealt separately with Jews and Gentiles prior to the death of Christ.
2. The “mystery” was an eternal plan to unite all men and treat them alike.
3. Christ’s PLACE in the “mystery”– to sit empowered to implement God’s plan.  
(Ephesians 1:20)
4. The Church’s PLACE in the “mystery”– to be the entity where all can “sit together.”  
(Ephesians 2:6)
5. The Church’s PLACE in the “mystery”– to receive all spiritual blessings in Christ.  
(Ephesians 1:3)
6. Principalities’ PLACE in the “mystery”– to see the superiority of God’s wisdom.  
(Ephesians 3:10)
7. Wicked Hosts’ PLACE in the “mystery”– to continue to oppose God’s plan and people.  
(Ephesians 6:12)

-oO-oOo-Oo-

