

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

**Year Six
Lessons 14-26**

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FOREWORD

Before independence was declared in Bomili, Belgian Congo, Africa, our missionaries of the African Christian Mission, wrote to the board of trustees, of which I am chairman:

“A new religion has sprung up in the Olina Territory. This native sect, called 'KITAWALA,' is a mild form of the Mau-Mau of the Kenya Colony. The basic principles are nearly the same as the principles of the Church of Christ. But after the native follows the baptism and the Lord's Supper, the next step is to commit incest with his own mother. The follower of 'Kitawala' is now entitled to be called 'Mwalimu'(TEACHER). Following this, the biggest and final step, is to kill a white man. The native is now supposed to turn into a white man and rule over all his former black brethren. There is absolutely no danger for the whites because the government is keeping close tab on this sect, which in reality has been going on for ten years, but only now is coming into prominence once again. No whites have been killed recently in the Congo. A government security agent, equal to an FBI agent, recently visited Olina while making an investigation of the following of this sect in that area. He reported that the government is watching carefully and there is not a great following of 'Kitawala!'”

Out of such an “atmosphere,” Independence came to the Congo June 30, 1960.

One of the by-products of such a “gospel” was the death of Dr. Carlson and Phyllis Rine, November 24, 1964.

But there is only ONE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, divinely revealed, which can make “new creatures” (II Cor. 5:17) of “every creature” (Mark 16:15, 16; Gal. 1:7-9). That gospel we will preach. It is the “Wonderful Story” of the mission and work of the BODY, the Church, which is the BRIDE OF CHRIST!

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 14
Galatians 2

Page 1
Memory Verse: Galatians 2:20

Memory Verse:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

THE GOSPEL VERSUS THE LAW

“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter.” (Gal. 1: 18f) This was after his conversion. This visit to Jerusalem was between 38-40 A. D. as told in Acts 9:23-29. It is generally assumed that his conversion took place about 37 A. D.

Paul omits his second visit to Jerusalem which took place about 44 A. D. The Antioch “relief” visit (Acts 11:30; 12:25) was a short one, and solely for the purpose of bringing benevolent gifts to the poor Christians in Jerusalem. It was no time for conference, and had no bearing on Paul’s gospel or apostleship. Let us see further:

I. His Authority Demonstrated (Galatians 2:1-5)

A. The journey to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1-2).

“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem...” (Gal. 2:1) Paul continues his life story. He is not writing a biography, but forging an argument. He is Christ’s divinely chosen apostle (Acts 26:16-19). Jesus Christ gave him his message, not the apostles at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:1, 12).

The visit of Gal. 1:10 is mentioned in Acts 9:23-29: 40 A. D. Second visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30; 12:25): 44 A. D.

The third visit to Jerusalem is told in Acts 15:1-32. It was made in 51 A. D., about “fourteen years” after his conversion. Luke in Acts 15 mentions the PUBLIC CONFERENCE. Paul in Galatians 2 tells of the PRIVATE CONFERENCE THAT PRECEDED THE WHOLE CHURCH GATHERING. Of course, there is NO CONFLICT!

“With Barnabas...” He had journeyed with Paul in establishing the Gentile churches. He knew the message of salvation by grace through the gospel. The gospel our Lord revealed to Paul DID NOT REQUIRE THE GENTILES to KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES. It did not require them to BE CIRCUMCISED (Acts 15:1f). The apostles, elders, and the church endorsed Paul and Barnabas over the protest of the Judaizers who had attacked them in Antioch.

“Took Titus with me.” Titus is not mentioned in Acts 15 nor anywhere else in Acts for some reason, “possibly because he was Luke’s own brother” (Robertson). His very presence was a challenge to the Judaizers, since he was a Greek Christian, He had NOT BEEN CIRCUMCISED. Paul probably brought him along as a TEST CASE OF THE RELATION OF GENTILE BELIEVERS to THE LAW OF MOSES!

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“And I went up by revelation...”(Gal. 2:2) “He was outwardly appointed to do so by the church at Antioch” (Acts 15:2). The Holy Spirit prompted him to go (read Acts 11:12; 16:6, 7). Whether this “revelation” was made to Paul in Person, or whether it was through the Spirit to the church, is not known. In either case, it gave Paul the absolute assurance that it was the will of God for him to go to Jerusalem to attend the historic council which determined for the Church and FOR ALL TIME the very question which the FALSE TEACHERS HAD REVIVED IN GALATIA. This was whether Christians NEEDED to OBSERVE THE, LAW OF MOSES.

“Communicated unto them... privately.” (2) Paul wisely consulted with the apostles privately, and “declared all things that God had done with them” (Acts 15:4). The apostle to the Gentiles sought the cooperation rather than the apposition of Peter, James the Lord's brother, and John. This private conference was held that those “which were of reputation” might fully understand his work among the Gentiles.

The present tense of the verb “preach” is significant. Paul is preaching the same gospel that he preached in Galatia. This gospel had received the sanction of the church in Jerusalem. Paul is no timeserver. He did not change his message to suit different occasions and hearers. If “a different gospel” had been preached to the Galatian churches, it was by FALSE, TEACHERS and not by Paul. He knew ONLY ONE GOSPEL (Gal. 1:12). Those who change this gospel are under a curse (Gal, 1:8, 9).

“Lest I... I should run... in vain.” Paul felt that the success of his whole ministry was at stake. He uses the familiar figure of the foot race. If he did not get the church leaders convinced of the divine origin of the gospel he preached, he would be like a runner, who, in spite of all his efforts, was to be disqualified or was to lose the prize of victory.

B. Circumcision repudiated as a religious rite (Galatians 2:3-5).

“But neither Titus... was compelled to be circumcised” (Gal. 2:3): As a Greek Christian, Titus did not observe the Law of Moses. Some “false brethren” (verse 4) or Judaizers who came to the private conference DEMANDED THAT TITUS BE CIRCUMCISED AND KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES IN ORDER TO BE A CHRISTIAN. Paul fought these troublemakers with all his might (verse 5). In Christ, we are FREE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT CEREMONIAL LAW, as circumcision and the keeping of certain “days” (Col. 2:16-18). Circumcision is not to be made a TEST OF FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST! Paul stood for and won SPIRITUAL LIBERTY.

Without any contradiction to this principle, Paul later HAD TIMOTHY CIRCUMCISED AS A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCY (Acts 16:3; I Cor. 9:22). This exercise of CHRISTIAN LIBERTY TO BE CIRCUMCISED AS A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCY gave Timothy wider influence in reaching Jews. No principle of fellowship was involved, or Paul would not have allowed it.

II. Paul's Authority Acknowledged (Galatians 2:6-10)

“But of those who seemed to be somewhat... added nothing to me” (Gal. 2:6): The apostles in Jerusalem made NO CORRECTION or ADDITION to the gospel Paul preached. They recognized its divine source (Gal. 1:11, 12). Peter, James and John agreed with Paul and Barnabas in their contention for freedom for the Gentile Christians from the BONDAGE of the MOSAIC CEREMONIAL LAW!

Thus Paul's authority was recognized and acknowledged. Read care-fully Acts 15 and get all the details of this Jerusalem conference. In that meeting it was settled by the Word of God, that the Christian is NOT UNDER THE, LAW OF MOSES. It is neither his MEANS OF LIFE, nor his RULE OF LIFE. But it

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was also emphasized that the Christian should be CAREFUL, in the exercise of liberty, to avoid, if possible, causing his “weak” brethren to stumble (compare Rom, 14:1-15:3; I Cor. 8:1-13).

“But contrariwise...” (Gal. 2:7) The leaders in Jerusalem saw that God had a special work for Peter among the Jews, and an equally important work for Paul among the Gentiles (verse 8). Since Paul recognized

Peter’s apostleship to the Jews (Acts 1:25; I Cor. 9:2), Peter acknowledges Paul’s apostleship to the Gentiles. This is a complete answer to the Judaizers who denied the genuineness of Paul’s apostleship because he was not one of the twelve apostles. Both men preached the SAME GOSPEL (Gal. 1:8, 9).

“And when James, Cephas, and John... pillars... right hands of fellowship” (Gal. 2:9): Cephas is the Hebrew name for Peter (see John 1:42). The rest of the apostles were probably absent from Jerusalem at the time of this visit. These FIVE MEN SHOOK HANDS AS EQUALS IN THE WORK OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL. Each had a SPECIAL SPHERE. OF WORK, but all had the SAME GOSPEL.

“Pillars”: Are leaders. James, our Lord’s half-brother, acted as an elder of the Jerusalem church and served as president of the Council (Acts 15:1f). The Bible knows NOTHING of the alleged supremacy of Peter as Pope.

“Only they would that we should remember the poor...” (Gal. 2:10) Paul loved the poor saints, the Christians, at Jerusalem. In fact Paul and Barnabas had brought “relief” from the church at Antioch to Jerusalem before (Acts 11:30; 12:25). Paul was constantly active in collections for the poor saints (I Cor. 16:1).

This meeting was a complete victory for Paul and Barnabas. Paul passes by the second public meeting and the letters to Antioch (Acts 15:6-29) and passes on to Peter’s conduct in Antioch.

III. Paul's Authority Exercised (Galatians 2:11-14)

“But when Peter was come to Antioch...” (Gal. 2:11) It is not known certainly when this event occurred. Probably it was soon after Paul’s return to Antioch from the visit referred to in Gal. 2:1, and before Paul set out on his Second MISSIONARY Journey (Acts 15:36-18:22).

At Jerusalem Peter ENDORSED PAUL’S POSITION THAT THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER IS NOT UNDER THE LAW. “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to PUT A YOKE UPON THE NECK OF THE DISCIPLES, which NEITHER OUR FATHERS NOR WE WERE ABLE TO BEAR? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ WE SHALL BE SAVED, EVEN AS THEY” (Acts 15:7-11).

Legalism at Large

Students of Galatians must keep in mind the two great divisions in the early church – the Jew and the GENTILE. Of the Jew, Peter, James and John were the Jerusalem leaders. Of the GENTILES, Paul and Barnabas were the leaders. These FIVE CHRISTIAN STATESMEN AND LEADERS were in FULL HARMONY, BUT the two sections of the church were NOT ALWAYS IN AGREEMENT. The Jewish Christians, as a rule, still KEPT THE JEWISH LAW AND HOPE for the CONVERSION OF THE WHOLE JEWISH NATION – until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, 70 A. D. One extreme wing of them

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INSISTED THAT THE GENTILES, SHOULD KEEP THE JEWISH LAW, ALSO. It is with this group that Paul frequently comes in conflict.

After Jerusalem as destroyed in 70 A. D., the temple in ruins, and the church removed elsewhere, the Jewish Christians gradually gave up the Jewish law. Then the two divisions welded into "ONE BODY" in which there neither Jew nor Gentile, but ALL ONE IN CHRIST (Eph. 4:4; Gal. 3:26-29).

Peter received the FIRST GENTILE CONVERT WITHOUT CIRCUMCISION probably between 35-40 A. D. (Acts 10:1f). This action was approved by the church and the Apostles (Acts 11:1f).

About 42 A. D. the GENTILE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH came into being, with the APPROVAL OF BARNABAS AS EMISSARY FROM JERUSALEM (Acts 11:22-24).

Paul's second visit to Jerusalem with the "relief" offering was in 44 A. D.

The THIRD VISIT to Jerusalem by Paul and Barnabas is told in Acts 15:1-32. Here Paul faced Peter AS HIS EQUAL IN RANK AND SPHERE OF WORK. "But when Peter came to Antioch" the apostle to the Jews, Peter, took a DIFFERENT ATTITUDE, and Paul

"I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed..." (Gal. 2:11b): Paul in Antioch looked Peter in the eye as his superior in character and courage. The Apostle to the Gentiles narrates it to show that Peter had NO SUPERIORITY OVER HIM, as the Judaizers claimed, and as our Roman Catholic friends still assert. Peter did a wrong thing, and Paul "had to oppose him, speaking sharply to him because what he did was very wrong" (LIVING LETTERS, The Paraphrased Epistles, Gal. 2:11b).

"For before... he did eat with the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:12): Jews thought it was unlawful to have social intercourse with Gentiles, or eat with them. God showed Peter this was NOT TRUE UNDER THE GOSPEL (Acts 10:11-16), so he ATE WITH GENTILE CHRISTIANS and DEFENDED HIS CONDUCT in so doing (Acts 11:3, 4, 12). BUT when "certain came from James," because he feared them, or because he was afraid that James at Jerusalem would not endorse what he had done, Peter "withdrew and separated himself..." from eating with Gentile Christians to AVOID CRITICISM. If carried to its logical conclusion, this meant he would not COMMUNE WITH THEM AROUND THE LORD'S TABLE. Now reread Acts 15:19, 24. Peter wanted to "avoid trouble"! The Apostle to the Jews had not changed his views from the Jerusalem resolutions. It was "PURE FEAR OF TROUBLE TO HIMSELF AS IN THE DENIALS AT THE TRIAL OF CHRIST" that caused him to "withdraw"! Here in "Peace at any price!" Many still "sell out the gospel" on the same basis of reasoning.

"And the other Jews dissembled... Barnabas also" (Gal. 2:13): They all fell into hypocrisy. They PRETENDED THAT THEY BELIEVED THE GOSPEL WITHOUT THE LAW SAVES US. Really they BELIEVED and ACTED the OPPOSITE. Peter's cowardice swept Barnabas off his feet, who with Paul had preached the gospel of grace and freedom from the law (see Prov. 29:25).

"But when I saw... I said unto Peter before them all." (Gal. 2:14) Peter was the chief offender. He was most consciously INSINCERE. Above all the rest, Peter was guilty of deception. He wielded the widest influence as the reputed CHIEF OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES AT Jerusalem.

A public sin DEMANDS A PUBLIC REBUKE." Then that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Tim. 5:20). Paul severely exposed Peter's hypocrisy. If Peter could not live up to the PERFECT DEMANDS OF THE LAW OF MOSES (Acts 15:10), WHY TRY TO PUT SUCH A YOKE ON THE

GENTILE CHRISTIANS? Paul charges Peter with trying to compel the Gentiles to live like Jews, to Judaize the Gentile Christians, the very point at issue in the Jerusalem Conference when Peter so loyally supported Paul. It was a bold thrust that allowed NO REPLY. But Paul won Peter back and Barnabas also, as shown by II Peter 3:15. Paul and Barnabas remained friends, though they soon separated over John Mark (Acts 15:39-41; I Cor 9:6).

IV. Salvation Is Uniform and Equal to All Men (Galatians 2:15-19).

“We who are Jews by nature...” (Gal. 2:15) It is not clear if verses 15-21 were spoken by Paul to Peter, or whether Paul addressed the Galatians in the light of the controversy with Peter. Burton thinks that Paul is “mentally addressing Peter, if not quoting from what he said to him.”

“WE”: You and I. Both Paul and Peter were “Jews by nature,” by birth and not Gentile sinners, as Jews were wont to call the Gentile heathen.

“Knowing that a man is NOT JUSTIFIED by the work of the law...” (Gal. 2:16): It is not a question of Justification FOR THE GENTILES any more than it is a question of justification for the Jews. For Jews and Gentiles alike Justification IS BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH, PLUS NOTHING! Both Peter and Paul KNEW THIS.

“But by the faith of Jesus Christ... justified by the faith of Christ.” The Gospel alone can save both Jew and Gentile.

“By the faith of Jesus Christ... not by the works of the law”: Two ways of getting RIGHT with GOD are here set forth:

1. “By the faith of Jesus Christ”, and

2. “By the works of the law.” The law was all right of itself, but man could not perfectly keep it. “For WHOSOEVER shall keep the WHOLE LAW, and yet offend in ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL” (James 2:10). Thus the Law of Moses was “DESTROYED” as a MEANS OF SALVATION. Jesus Christ is God’s ONLY MEANS to SAVE MEN. Paul in his first recorded sermon affirms “that through this man (Jesus Christ) is preached unto you (Gentiles) the FORGIVENESS OF SINS: and BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS, from which ye could NOT BE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW OF MOSES” (Acts 15:39).

“For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” This passage is quoted in Rom. 3:20, is found in Psalm 143:2.

“But if... we... are found sinners.” (Gal. 2:17) Peter and Paul came to Christ for justification, because the gospel revealed to us that we were sinners, though professing to keep the Law of Moses. “Is Christ therefore the minister of sin?” Did Christ make us Jews sinners? No, but when the knowledge of the GOSPEL COMES, Jews FIND THAT THEY ARE and HAVE BEEN SINNERS LIKE THE GENTILES! Christ only reveals to them their sinful state.

“If I build up again those things which I destroyed...” (Gal. 1:18) If Paul and Peter GO BACK FROM CHRIST to Moses, and teach others to do the same, “I make myself a transgressor.” By so doing

they would teach men to TRUST IN THE WORKS OF THE LAW WHICH CANNOT justify either Jew or Gentile!

Peter by his shifts had contradicted himself helplessly as Paul shows. When Peter lived like a Gentile, he TORE DOWN THE CEREMONIAL LAW. When Peter LIVED LIKE A Jew, HE TORE DOWN SALVATION BY GRACE!

“For I through the law am dead to the law...” (Gal. 2:19) When Paul realized what the law really demanded, he discovered that he NEVER could SECURE JUSTIFICATION BY HIS TRYING To KEEP THE LAW. Rather the law passed on him a moral sentence of death. The law revealed the reality and the depth of his sin. The law gave him NO POWER TO OVERCOME SIN. Therefore he turned from the law as a MEANS OF SALVATION, or of acceptance with God. He did so once for all, as truly AS THOUGH HE HAD DIED TO THE LAW. His relation to the law was broken as completely as earthly relations are broken by death (compare Rom. 7:4-6; Gal. 3:24).

V. How the Gospel Voids the Law of Moses (Galatians 2:20-21)

“I am crucified with Christ... Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2:20) By identifying himself with Christ Paul entered upon a new and truer life. When he surrendered his will to Christ and came to trust Christ alone for his salvation, it was an experience in which he was SO UNITED WITH CHRIST THAT IN EFFECT HE PARTOOK OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST and BECAME ONE WITH THE RISEN CHRIST.

Crucifixion may picture the pain and anguish of soul that accompanies DEATH TO SELF and a COMPLETE YIELDING TO THE SERVICE OF CHRIST. Here it pictures the ABSOLUTE ABANDONMENT OF PAUL’S FORMER LIFE OF LEGAL RIGHTEOUSNESS and CONFIDENCE IN THE LAW. To all that world of rites and ceremonies, AS MEANS OF SALVATION, PAUL WAS DEAD. He DIED TO THEM at the CROSS OF CHRIST, for in that cross Paul found the perfect sacrifice for sin, and by faith in the risen Christ Paul found the source of true righteousness! Truly he could say, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me... by the faith of the Son of God, who love me, and gave himself for me.” The person and personality of Paul were not destroyed. Paul never ceased to think and act. His moral responsibility was never suspended.

“The life which I now live... I live by the faith”: Faith is the link that unites the person of Paul with the person of his Lord. Faith becomes the channel through which Paul receives new power for living. Christ is the OBJECT ON WHICH THE FAITH OF PAUL RESTS. Our saving, justifying, sanctifying faith, rests on a DIVINE PERSON, “THE SON OF GOD”! Paul accepted pardon and peace as FREE GIFTS from God, and in loving gratitude went forth to serve the Christ who for his sake had died and risen again (Rom. 6:23).

“I do not frustrate the grace of God...” (Gal. 2:21) Paul declares that he does not, he cannot “frustrate” or “make void the grace of God,” as he indeed would be doing if he were attempting by works of the law to secure his acceptance with God. If men could have been justified by keeping the Law of Moses, there would have been no necessity for the death of Christ. “If righteousness were through Law, then Christ died to no purpose.”

A Martyr for Christ

On July 1, 1555, John Bradford was burned to death. He was chaplain to King Edward the Sixth of England, and was one of the most popular preachers of his day. But he was a martyr to his faith. As he was being driven out to Newgate to be burned, permission was given him to speak, and from the wagon in which he rode to his death the entire way out from West London to Newgate he shouted: "Christ, Christ, none but Christ!" John Bradford was feeling very much as Paul must have felt. Only with Paul, it was not the outburst of a spasmodic elation, but the expression of a life habit. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet nest I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

QUESTIONS

1. How many visits did Paul make to Jerusalem, when and why (Gal. 1:18f; Acts 9:23-29; 11:30; 12:25; Gal. 2:1)?
2. Who went with Paul to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1, 3)?
3. Who told Paul to go to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:2; Acts 15:2; compare Acts 11:12; 16:6, 7)?
4. What did Paul preach on that occasion (Gal. 2:2)?
5. To whom did Paul talk first (Gal. 2:2; Acts 15:4), and why?
6. Why did Paul not circumcise Titus (Gal. 2:3-5)?
7. Why did Paul later circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3; I Cor. 9:22)?
8. What did Paul say of the prominent leaders (Gal. 2:6)?
9. Who are named as among the church leaders at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9)?
10. What was the attitude of these leaders toward Paul's message of grace (Gal. 2:9, 10)?
11. What did they want Paul to remember (Gal. 2:10; compare I Cor. 16:1-3; II Cor. 8:1-4)?
12. Why did Paul rebuke Peter to his face (Gal. 2:11)?
13. What caused Peter's action (Gal. 2:12)?
14. What was the effect of Peter's compromise (Gal. 2:13)?
15. What did Paul see, and what was his bold rebuke (Gal. 2:14)?
16. What did Paul remind Peter they both, as Jews, knew (Gal. 2:15, 16; Acts 15:7-11)?
17. By what is a man NOT Justified (Gal. 2:16, Psa. 143:2; Rom. 3:20)?
18. By whom are we justified (Gal. 2:16)?
19. How had Paul become "dead to the law" (Gal. 2:19-20)?
20. If "righteousness come by the law," what is the fearful conclusion (Gal. 2:21)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 15
Galatians 3

Page 1
Memory Verse: Galatians 3:24

Memory Verse:

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24).

FAITH AND THE LAW

NO ONE, apart from our Lord Jesus Christ, ever did the best that he KNEW or COULD. To be SAVED “BY THE LAW” OF MOSES demanded that one KEEP ALL THE LAW HE KNOWS. “For whosoever shall keep the WHOLE LAW, and yet offend IN ONE POINT, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

PERSONAL

Paul has shown that he is a divinely inspired apostle with authority from “God and...the Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:1):

1. He was chosen independently of the twelve (Gal. 1:11-24).
2. The apostles recognized him as an apostle (Gal. 2:1-10).
3. Paul rebuked Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-21).

DOCTRINAL

The POLEMICAL or DOCTRINAL part of the book of Galatians includes chapters 3 and 4. Here the apostle to the Gentile shows the relation of faith and the Law of Moses. This is “BIBLE TEACHING AS TO FAITH” made clear. We are justified, that is, MADE RIGHTEOUS or worthy of acceptance to God, BY FAITH!

I. The Reach of Faith and the Law (Galatians 3:1-14)

A. To turn to LAW-WORKS is to lose Christ (Galatians 3:1-5).

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you...” (Gal. 3:1): Paul’s tone of address is severe. “You senseless Galatians” (Goodspeed). “O thoughtless Galatians” (Berkeley). “The foolish Galatians were without excuse when they fell under the spell of the Judaizers,” the ones who urged them to ADD THE LAW-WORKS of MOSES to their FAITH as the real basis of acceptance with God. This was absolutely wrong, “I do not frustrate the grace of God: FOR IF RIGHTEOUSNESS CAME BY THE LAW, THEN CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN!” (Gal. 2:21)

“Bewitched” implies a reference to the familiar superstition of the “evil eye” or “voodoo” or to lead astray by evil arts. The false teachers by some “magic spell” were turning the Galatians from Christ (Gal. 5:7) to the Law of Moses.

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“Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth”: Paul had faithfully and fully preached Christ crucified while among the Galatians. Before their very eyes “Jesus Christ was so graphically presented as crucified”!

The Judaizers without much difficulty could deceive their victims and make them believe that without abandoning Christ, they MIGHT ATTAIN MERIT BY OBSERVING THOSE CEREMONIES WHICH HAD BEEN FOLLOWED BY THE PROPHETS AND HEROES OF OLD AND BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES AS WELL.

It is not hard to understand the fascination which RITES and CEREMONIES HAVE FOR MEN OF TODAY, especially when those observances claim the sanction of ANTIQUITY and of Christian tradition. However, “antiquity” and “tradition” of men is not equal to TRUTH as it is in Jesus Christ through His REVEALED WORD. “Prove all things; hold fast that is good” (I Thess. 5:20).

“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or... of faith?” (Gal. 3:2): Paul strikes at the heart of the problem. He will show their error by the point that the gifts of the Spirit came by the HEARING OF FAITH, not by works of the law! Let the Galatians answer. Paul had preached Christ to them, they had HEARD, BELIEVED and OBEYED the gospel. NOT A WORD WAS SAID OF THE WORKS OF THE LAW. YET God APPROVED HIS WORK BY GIVING THEM MIRACULOUS POWERS (verses 5, 14). Such powers CAME THROUGH THE GOSPEL, NOT THROUGH THE LAW OF MOSES.

“Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3): If SPIRITUAL GIFTS have come to them along the pathway of FAITH, is it not folly to SEEK NOW FOR PERFECTION ALONG THE LINE OF RITUAL OBSERVANCE? “They were advancing backward!” If they were not saved in Christ, their suffering was in vain (Acts 14:2, 5, 19, 22; Gal. 3:4).

“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit...” (Gal. 3:5) The word “ministereth” or “supplieth” indicates a generous and gracious and rich bestowal. Paul intimates that the FALLING AWAY OF THE GALATIANS HAS ONLY THREATENED, or begun. God is STILL BESTOWING UPON THEM ABUNDANTLY THE GIFTS OF HIS SPIRIT, Faith in Christ was the SOURCE of such blessings, NOT THE LAW OF WORKS OF MOSES from which they turned to accept the gospel Paul preached.

B. Faith is the basis of acceptance to God (Galatians 3:6-9).

“Even as Abraham believed God...” (Gal. 3:6): The Galatians would have to reply to the questions of verse 5, “by the hearing of FAITH.” Abraham “believed in the Lord; and HE (GOD) COUNTED IT TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Gen. 15:6). This passage is quoted in Rom. 4: 3, 9, 21, 22 and in James 2:23.

“Know ye...that they...of faith...are the children of Abraham” (Gal. 3:7) Paul now states his GREAT ARGUMENT. Abraham’s FAITH MADE HIM RIGHTEOUS, He is the spiritual father of believers. REAL SONS of Abraham are those whose spiritual kinship comes from FAITH, NOT BY BLOOD.

John the Baptist denounced the Pharisees and Sadducees as VIPERS through descendants of Abraham (Matt. 3:7). Jesus termed the Pharisees children of the devil and NOT SPIRITUAL CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM (not children of God) in John 8:37-44).

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“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith...” (Gal. 3:8): The promise to Abraham was a prediction of the “GOOD NEWS” which God meant for ALL MEN, Gentile as well as Jew. “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). “And all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Gen. 18:18). As Gentiles, we Christians CAN NEVER AFTER THE FLESH be children of Abraham, but THROUGH FAITH we “are the children of Abraham” (verse 7).

Observe that

1. This promise is made to Abraham long before he was circumcised.
2. It is a promise of a blessing for the Gentile nations through him.
3. It is a promise of Christ, and hence the GOSPEL IN PROMISE BEFORE THE LAW EXISTED!

“So then...” (Gal. 3:9): This promise embraces Gentile believers. They are blessed as believing Abraham was blessed (see verse 6). C. Faith delivers us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10-14).

“For... Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things...” (Gal. 3:10) Paul quotes Deut. 27:26, the close of the curses on Mt. Ebal. This was a “picture of the curse hanging over them like a Damascus blade.” While the law CANNOT BRING THE BLESSINGS we obtain through the gospel, the law can and DOES BRING A CURSE, To FAIL to KEEP THE WHOLE LAW, brings the curse of the law upon us. The curse becomes effective only when the law is violated (James 2:10). No man can keep the law perfectly, Peter reminded the Jerusalem Council. “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke (the law) upon the neck of the disciples (Gentile Christians), which neither our fathers (Jews) nor we (the apostles and Hebrew Christians) were able to bear?” (Acts 15:10). This brings the “curse of the law” UPON ALL MEN (Rom. 3:19, 23). “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident” (Gal. 3:11a). Judged by such a standard, NO MAN CAN BE JUSTIFIED, or MADE RIGHTEOUS, IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. OBEDIENCE MUST NOT ONLY BE FREE FROM ALL POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS, BUT IT MUST BE CONTINUOUS AND UNBROKEN! NO ONE EXCEPT Jesus has ever kept all the law, God’s PERFECT LAW (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 7:12).

“The just shall live by faith.” To seek RIGHTEOUSNESS BY THE LAW OF MOSES is CONTRARY TO THE PROPHETS. “The JUST shall LIVE BY HIS FAITH” (Heb. 2:4), NOT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW! God’s people in the prophet’s day were in great peril, but in which peril DELIVERANCE was assured to the righteous who put their trust in God.

Paul employs Hab. 2:4 as a statement of a GREAT PRINCIPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHICH THOSE WHO TRUST IN GOD ARE ACCEPTED AS RIGHTEOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. He contrasts it with the principle that is involved in the LAW -- namely, a PRINCIPLE OF WORKS.

“And the law is NOT OF FAITH: but, The man that DOETH them shall live in them.” (Gal. 3:12) In accordance with the principle which Paul quotes from the law: “He who does these things shall live by them” (Berkeley). “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes... which if a man DO, he shall LIVE IN THEM” (Lev. 18:5). The law DEMANDS PERFECT OBEDIENCE. It does not rest on mercy, faith and grace. Since NONE can keep the law perfectly, all are under the CURSE (verse 10).

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“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law...” (Gal. 3:13): We were under (hupo) a curse, Christ became a curse OVER (hyper) us and so BETWEEN US AND THE OVERHANGING CURSE WHICH FELL ON HIM INSTEAD OF ON US, Thus Christ bought us out (ek) and we are FREE FROM THE CURSE WHICH HE TOOK ON HIMSELF.

“Written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” This quotation is from Deut. 21:23 with the omission “of God,” for Christ was not cursed of God. The allusion was to the exposure of dead bodied on stakes or crosses (Josh. 10:26), which had to be buried before nightfall.

Christ HANGED ON THE CROSS in open shame before all, that “we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (verse 14). “We” means BOTH Jews and GENTILE obtain the promise of “the BLESSING” MADE TO ABRAHAM THROUGH FAITH, not through law (Gen. 12:3; 15:6; 17:10, 24; Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:38, 39). For the third time Paul shows in this paragraph that the SPIRIT CAME BY THE FAITH, NOT BY THE LAW (compare verses 2, 5).

II. The Priority of Faith (Galatians 3:15-19)

A. Faith and promises came before the Law of Moses (Galatians 3:15-18).

“Brethren... Through it be but a man's covenant.” (Gal. 3:15) Paul uses an illustration from the CUSTOM and PRACTICE OF MAN. When “a human contract has once been confirmed,” it cannot be CHANGED OR TAMPERED WITH IN ANY WAY. “BOTH PARTIES can by agreement CANCEL A CONTRACT, but not otherwise.” It is UNLAWFUL TO ADD FRESH CLAUSES. What about those who want to “ADD” to the gospel today (Gal. 1:8, 9; Rev. 22:18, 19)?

“Now to Abraham and his seed... thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16) The promise to Abraham uses SPERMA as a collective substantive and applies to all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, as Paul has shown in verses 7 - 14, and as he knew full well. Here Paul uses a rabbinical refinement that is yet intelligible. The covenant with its promises was made to Abraham and his seek. The promises were spoken on several occasions (Gen. 12:3, 7; 13:16; 15:5; 17:7). The promises were to the “SEED,” as well as to Abraham, and hence DID NOT TERMINATE with his death.

“They seed, which is Christ”: Luther says: “My dear brother Paul, this argument won't stick.” The criticism is that “SPERMA,” the Greek word blundered “seed,” is a collective noun and may include ALL ABRAHAM'S DESCENDENTS. Paul shows that he knows the meaning of “sperma” in Rom. 4:18; 9:7, but the Question HERE IS NOT ONE OF GRAMMAR, BUT OF SPIRITUAL MEANING. To Paul “sperma” IMPLIES UNITY. There is a “SEED” to whom the PROMISE IS GIVEN, a “SEED” that embraces MANY, BUT IS ONE. That “SEEDS” is CHRIST, and ALL IN CHRIST. The whole SPIRITUAL SEED of Abraham IS CONCENTRATED IN CHRIST. The promise is to Christ and ALL IN CHRIST (I Cor. 12:12). Paul understood Greek better than his critics, and also KNEW WHAT HE MEANT!

“And...the covenant...cannot disannul...make the promise of none effect.” (Gal. 3:17) Paul returns to the argument of verse 15. He has just shown that this “covenant” was not only with Abraham, but also with his spiritual seed, and that it must continue in effect until Christ carne. “The law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul,” The COVENANT MADE WITH ABRAHAM IS STILL IN FORCE!

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“Four hundred and thirty years after”: “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years” (ex. 12:40). See also Gen. 15:13. Usher’s chronology has the promise made to Abraham 1921 B. C. The law was given at Sinai 1491 B. C. The interval is 430 years. Some have held that Paul made a mistake, because Ex. 12:40 says Israel “dwelt in Egypt... 430 years.”

The Septuagint Version, or LXX, of the Old Testament is the one usually followed by Christ and the apostles. The LXX translators following the Hebrew copy before them, render Exodus 12:40, “The sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, AND IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, was four hundred and thirty years,” Whether THIS IS RIGHT, or OUR HEBREW TEXT, does not matter. “It is immaterial to Paul’s argument,” says Dr. A. T. Robertson, “which chronology is adopted.” Burton adds, “The longer the covenant had been in force the more impressive is his statement.” “The inheritance” came to Abraham, not by the Mosaic Law (verse 18).

B. The law showed the necessity of faith (Galatians 3:19-22):

“Wherefore then serveth the law?” (Gal. 3:19) Why then the law? This is a pertinent question if the PROMISE OF ABRAHAM ANTEDATES IT HOLDS ON AFTERWARDS. In Paul’s mind the law of Moses is NO PART of the covenant, but a thing apart “in no way modifying its provisions” (Burton). It was “added.”

“It was added because of transgressions.” It was NO PART of the original promise made to Abraham. The law came to SHOW MEN THEIR SIN, to convince men of their inability to save themselves. The law measured the guilt and depth of human disobedience. It was never designed to secure righteousness, but it was intended to SHOW THE NEED OF A REDEEMER.

“It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator”: The law was not directly given, as was the Gospel on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 14f), but through angels (Deut. 33:2; Heb. 2:2). It was not given personally, but THROUGH MOSES a “mediator,” or go-between. “I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord...” (Deut. 5:5), affirms Moses. There was no “mediator” or middleman between God and Abraham (verse 20). God made the promise directly to Abraham. The law could not SAVE US (verse 21), but “locked us up” in sin (verse 22). FAITH IN CHRIST SAVES US.

C. How the law prepared us for faith (Galatians 3:23-29).

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law...” (Gal. 3:23) Paul insists that the law kept the Jews in the state of children under age. “Before faith came” we were confined, as it were, in prison, in a state of preparation for the faith that was to be revealed. The law “was added” (verse 19) to do a work of preparation until the gospel was revealed.

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster...” (Gal. 3:24) The law at best served as a “schoolmaster,” or TUTOR, to prepare the Jew and Gentile to accept Christ. The “schoolmaster” or “pedagogue” was a trusted servant, or slave, in the better Greek or Roman families in charge of the boy from about six to sixteen. He watched over the boy’s behavior, and attended him from home to school. THUS the law TUTORED US, but Christ is our SCHOOLMASTER. The pedagogue is now dismissed. We are in the school of Christ (verse 25).

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“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal, 3:26): God is the Father of all men as Creator, but the SPIRITUAL FATHER ONLY of those who by faith in Christ Jesus receive “adoption” into His family (Rom. 8:15, 23). Those led by the Spirit are sons of God (Rom. 8:14).

“For as many baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:27) The gospel that we believe brings us INTO SONSHIP with God by BAPTISM. “We put on the personality of Christ in the sight of God.” All man-made barriers are DROPPED. We are “ALL ONE IN CHRIST Jesus” (verse 28),

“And if ye be Christ's, then...” (Gal. 3:29): This is the test, not the accident of blood, pride of race or nation, clothing, environment, family, or whether man or woman. As Christ is the “SEED” of Abraham, all in Christ become the spiritual seed of Abraham, and hence heirs of the promise to Abraham’s seed!

QUESTIONS

1. How does Paul describe those who mix “law” and “grace” (Gal. 3:1)?
2. How did the Galatians receive the Spirit (Gal. 3:2)?
3. What were the Galatians trying to do (Gal, 3:3)?
4. Can you name SEVEN things which the law could not do (Gal. 2:21; 3:2, 5, 11, 17, 18, 21)?
5. Can you name SEVEN things which the law could do (Rom. 3:19; 4:15; 5:20; 7:7; Gal. 2:19; 3:10, 24)?
6. What is the believer’s relationship to the law (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 3:28; 6:14; 7:4, 6; 8:3, 4; 10:4)?
7. Was the covenant made with Abraham one of WORKS or ONE OF FAITH (Gal. 3:6-9; Rom. 4:10-13)?
8. What did the Scripture foresee when declaring the gospel to Abraham (Gal. 3:8)? Who only are blessed with FAITHFUL ABRAHAM (Gal. 3:9)?
9. Why is it impossible for the good, holy law of God (Rom. 7:12) to work righteousness through the flesh (Gal. 3:10; Rom. 7:14, 18, 21-23; 8:3)?
10. If a man is UNDER THE LAW, what else is he under (Gal. 3:10)?
11. In whose sight is there NO Justification BY THE LAW (Gal. 3:11)?
12. How did Christ redeem the believer from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23; Jas. 2:10; Acts 15:10)?
13. What are the blessed results for the Gentiles, and how many times did Paul show HOW FAITH COMES (Gal. 3:14, 2, 5)?
14. Since the PROMISE CAME BEFORE THE LAW, what does Paul conclude (Gal. 3:17, 18)?
15. Why, and for what period of time, was the law “added” (Gal. 3:19)?
16. Who was the “mediator” between God and Israel when the law was given (Gal. 3:20; Ex. 19:9; 34:1-4)?
17. What was the condition of the Jews BEFORE THE CROSS (Gal. 3:23)?
18. What did the law DO for us (Gal. 3:24)? When did the law END (Gal. 3:25)?
19. How do we become “the children of God by faith” (Gal. 3:26, 27)?
20. Does God make any distinction between Jew and GENTILE as far as SALVATION IS CONCERNED (Gal. 3:28, 29)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 16
Galatians 4

Page 1
Memory Verse: Galatians 4:3-5

Memory Verse:

“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:3-5).

THE BELIEVER'S SONSHIP

The apostle Paul in Galatians 4 resumes the metaphor begun in Galatians 3:24, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster (tutor) to bring us unto Christ, that we might be JUSTIFIED BY FAITH.”

In the better Greek and Roman families of the better class a trusted slave, a pedagogue, had charge of the boy from about six to sixteen. The pedagogue watched his behavior at home and attended him when he went away from home as to school.

Christ is our SCHOOLMASTER, and the law as pedagogue kept watch over us till we came to Christ.

There, law, or the tutor was prominent; here, the son, or pupil, is the CHIEF OBJECT of consideration.

I. The Adoption of Sons (Galatians 4:1-7)

“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child...” (Gal. 4:1) In Gal. 3:29 the apostle spoke of “heirs according to the promises.” He now shows WHY the bondage of the law preceded the gospel. Even an “heir” is not FREE WHEN A CHILD. “As long as the heir is a MINOR” (Good-speed). Those who LIVE UNDER THE LAW are spiritually immature. They were like children under “tutors” who were being prepared for FAITH IN CHRIST. Legally, they are OWNERS OF ALL.

“But is still under tutors... until the time appointed.” (Gal. 4:2) The “tutors” had charge of his person. The “governors” were stewards who managed his estate (Matt. 20:8), or one in charge of children as here.

When Paul wrote to the Galatians all his readers would understand him. Then “minor” children were NOT RECOGNIZED AS THEIR FATHER’S HEIRS UNTIL THEY CAME OF AGE, and were taken by their fathers to the FORUM, answering to our court-house, and OFFICIALLY ADOPTED or PLACED AS HIS SONS. From then on they were not considered “minor children,” but RECOGNIZED AS SONS and “HEIRS”!

“Even so we... in bondage under the elements of the world.” (Gal. 4:3) Both Jews and Gentiles before the epoch of FAITH CAME were under the law as pedagogue, guardian, and steward, to use all of Paul’s metaphors. We were “in bondage” to the law of Moses, or some other form of law, described as “elements,” elementary in contrast to the PERFECT WAY of FAITH IN CHRIST.

“But when the fullness of the time was come...” (Gal. 4:4): God sent forth his PREEXISTING SON (Phil. 2:6) when the time for His purpose had come. “When the time had come” (Berkeley).

The coming of Christ marked the period of release from the state of spiritual infancy and servitude, and of the entrance upon the promised possession. The preparation for Christ’s coming was mature and worldwide.

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Conditions which favored His coming were these: 1) The establishment of Roman law. 2) The universal spread of Greek culture. 3) The Jews had gone everywhere with his knowledge of the ONE, TRUE GOD, and belief in the coming of the Messiah.

Other preparation that Paul may have had in mind: 1) Man universally had a sense of NEED for a Saviour. 2) Man everywhere felt his moral helplessness, and 3) Hence “every creature” felt self-condemned!

These steps God had taken to LIBERATE THE WARD UNDER THE LAW, and “God sent forth his Son,” to BRING ABOUT THE ACTUAL LIBERATION.

“Made of a woman”: “There is, of course, no direct reference here,” A. T. Robertson reminds us, “to the Virgin Birth of Jesus, but His deity had just been affirmed by the words 'His Son,' so that both His deity and humanity are here stated as in Rom. 1:3. Whatever view one holds about Paul's knowledge of the Virgin Birth of Christ one must admit that Paul BELIEVED in his ACTUAL PERSONAL PREEXISTENCE WITH GOD (II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-11), not a MERE EXISTENCE IN IDEA. The fact of the Virgin Birth agrees perfectly with the language here.”

“Made under the law”: “Born” subject to Law (Matt. 5:17). Jesus not only became a man, but a Jew. Christ became FLESH (John 1:14).

“To redeem them that were under the law...” (Gal. 4:5) “Christ has bought us free from the curse of the Law inasmuch as He became a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13, Berkeley).

“Adoption of sons”: Christ redeemed us to bring us to the ESTATE of ADOPTED SONS (II Cor. 8:9). “Adoption” here does not mean the same thing as “adoption” does to us. We speak of adoption as the act of a man who takes a child not related to him and agrees to rear him as his own son. The Greek word means “SON-PLACING,” and refers to a custom among the Greeks and Romans by which a father when his son came of age INDUCTED HIM PUBLICLY INTO A POSITION OF SONSHIP! From that day he was proclaimed SON and HEIR, FELLOW and PARTNER of his Father. Jesus came to BESTOW SONSHIP upon Jew and Gentile, upon all who would believe in Jesus Christ (Heb. 5:9).

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit...” (Gal. 4:6): Because we are SONS OF GOD through the OPERATION OF FAITH (John 1:12), the Spirit of Christ is bestowed upon us ENABLING us to call God, Father.

“Abba, Father.” Father in Hebrew is “Ab,” and the added syllable “ba” is a diminutive (like gosling, or lambkin) equal to our “Papa.” “Father” comes to us from the Greek, “pater.” As God’s sons by faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6), we now cry like the “groanings” of Rom. 8:26. We are no longer SLAVES, “but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (verse 7). Christ has set us free from BONDAGE to the Law. What an INHERITANCE IS OURS (Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 1:3-5). We shall dwell in the “Father's house” (John 14:1-3) when we fully enter into our inheritance! Let us live to honor the Father (Matt. 5:16).

II. An Appeal to Pride (Galatians 4:8-11)

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God...” (Gal. 4:8): These Galatians were heathens before Paul took the gospel to them. They were enslaved to heathen customs and served idols “called gods” (I Cor. 8:5) that “essentially are not gods” (Berkeley). They worshipped images “humanly manufactured or invented” (Acts 17:29). They used charms against evil spirits. Life was miserable and hopeless.

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“But now, after that ye have known God...” (Gal. 4:9): Christ changed all this when the Galatians BELIEVED and OBEYED Him (Heb. 5:9). They “knew” God because God had taken note of them and SENT THEM THE GOSPEL (I John 4:19).

“How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements...” Paul is not intending to reflect upon the sacred character of the Jewish law. It had high function and purpose. This had been served.

“Weak”: The Law of Moses had NO POWER TO STRENGTHEN.

“Beggarly”: The Law had no RICH PROMISES like the gospel (for example, Acts 2:38, 42, 47).

“Elements”: An undeveloped state. Childhood. WHY would you Galatian Christians WANT TO TURN BACK TO SUCH THINGS, and “be in bondage?”

“Ye observe days...” (Gal. 4:10): As Sabbath, fast-days, feast-days, and new moons of the Old Testament. See Lev. 23:1-3.

“Months”: The months are the new moons (Isa. 66:23).

“Times” Passover (Lev. 23:4-8), Pentecost or “firstfruits” (Lev. 23:9-16), tabernacle (Lev. 23:34-44).

“Years”: Sabbatical, or seventh year, year of Jubilee (50th). Here and in Col. 2:16 Paul shows CLEARLY THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT REQUIRED TO KEEP THE Jewish Sabbath and special days required by the Law of Moses.

“I am afraid of you...labor in vain” (Gal. 4:11): He did not fear them, but “fear that perhaps I WASTED MY EFFORTS ON YOU”!

III. An Appeal to Affection (Galatians 4:12-20)

“Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am...” (Gal. 4:12): His tone becomes more tender. He wants them to come to his point of view. “Take my position... just as I once took yours” (Goodspeed). He had FORSAKEN HIS POSITION as a Jew under the law and had taken his place as a sinner to depend upon God’s grace through Christ for salvation. He became simply a Christian that made him in the eyes of the Jews as a GENTILE TO THEM.

“Ye have not injured me...” Paul cherishes no grudge. He harbors no resentment.

“Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you...” (Gal. 4:13): Was Paul’s “infirmity of the flesh” EYE TROUBLE (Gal. 4:15), a “thorn in the flesh” (II Cor. 12:7)? We do not know. The apostle obviously reached them on his first or second missionary journey (Acts 13:14; 15:36-18:22) in POOR PHYSICAL CONDITION. Yet the Galatians treated him well. The stoning at Lystra was hardly “an infirmity of the flesh,” but it may have left ONE WITH HIM (Acts 19, 20; II Cor. 12:1-10). The Galatians understood the allusion. They did not hate or spit him out, or spurn him. They “welcomed me like an angel of God, like Christ” (verse 14). So great was their joy and sense of obligation, they could not do enough to show their gratitude. They would even have given him their own eyes – a proverbial expression to show their deep gratitude (verse 15).

“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16): It is risky business to tell the WHOLE TRUTH. “It may hit and hurt.” Paul still loves them. The gospel has not changed, BUT THE GALATIANS HAVE CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE FAWNING, LYING JUDAIZERS (verse 17). Paul’s purpose is high and lofty; that of the Judaizers is low and evil (verse 18).

“My little children... I travail in birth again” (Gal. 4:19): “I once more suffer birth pains until Christ is formed within you.” The very pain and anguish of soul which Paul endured in winning them to Christ, is equaled by his anxiety about their leaving the gospel for the LAW OF BONDAGE (verse 20).

IV. An Appeal to Intelligence (Galatians 4:21-31)

“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” (Gal. 4:21): Paul now appeals to the pride and to the affection of his readers. He appeals to their intelligence? He addresses those who were inclined to yield to the Judaizers. They CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND the Mosaic Law and are willing to BE BOUND BY ITS PRECEPTS. The apostle makes a surprising turn, but a legitimate one for the legalists by all allegorical use of Scripture. He uses the Old Testament as a PICTURE TO MAKE MORE PLAIN A POINT ALREADY PROVED!

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons...” (Gal. 4:22): Read Gen. 16:15; 21:2. This is not a quotation, but a brief summary of the story, the principle of which Paul wishes to apply. “Son... handmaid... born after the flesh” (Gal. 4:23): Ishmael. The Arabs are his descendents. It was a natural, physical birth.

“But he of the free woman was by promise”: “The one by the free woman came on account of the promise.” Isaac was the child of promise – a miracle child.

“Which things are an allegory...” (Gal. 4:24); “Allegory” is compounded of ‘allo,’ another, and ‘agoreuo,’ to speak, and so means speaking something else than what the language means. The narrative in Genesis is HISTORICAL. It actually happened. Paul uses it to illustrate his point for the Galatians who wanted to GO BACK TO THE LAW OF MOSES. Bunyan’s PILGRIM’S PROGRESS is an allegory.

Hagar represented the “law” or “covenant” of Moses. Sarah represented the promise of God to Abraham, or “grace”. The law came from Mt. Sinai (verses 24, 25). Jerusalem then represented those still subject or in “bondage” to the law.

“But Jerusalem which is ABOVE is free...” (Gal. 4:26): Heavenly Jerusalem, the spiritual city of all Christians. The law had many children, but those of “promise” or grace are more numerous (verses 27, 28; Isa. 54:1; 51:2). We Christians are “THE CHILDREN OF PROMISE” (verse 28)!

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him... born after the Spirit” (Gal. 4:29): Gen. 21:9 has in Hebrew “laughing,” but the Septuagint or LXX has “mocking”. The Jewish tradition represents Ishmael as shooting arrows at Isaac. So now the Jews were persecuting Paul and all Christians (I Thess. 5: 15f).

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son...” (Gal. 4:30) The expulsion of Ishmael from the patriarchal home brings a STERN REBUKE to those to seek to secure a place in the church BOTH FOR THE BONDAGE, OF THE LAW and FOR THE FREEDOM THAT IS IN CHRIST. Christians are accepted of God. “We, therefore, are not children of the servant girl, but of the free woman” (verse 31).

The Two Covenants Contrasted

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL: Judaism

The Old Covenant
 The Law
 Natural Birth
 Mt. Sinai in Arabia
 The Earthly Jerusalem
 Bondage
 Persecuting
 To be CAST OUT and OFF

Sarah and Isaac: Christianity

The New Covenant
 The Gospel

Spiritual Birth
 Mount Zion Above
 The Heavenly Jerusalem
 Freedom
 Persecuted
 HEIRS OF THE INHERITANCE

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QUESTIONS

1. How does a child not differ from a “servant” (Gal. 4:1)?
2. How long is a child under a “schoolmaster” or “tutors” (Gal. 4:2)?
3. What was the position of both Jew and Gentile before the death of Christ (Gal. 4:3)?
4. Can you name six things said of Christ’s coming (Gal. 4:4, 5)?
5. What conditions favored Christ’s coming (Gal. 4:4)?
6. Did Paul probably have other preparation for His coming in mind?
7. To whom is the Son responsible (Gal. 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:7)?
8. Of what was Paul “afraid” (Gal. 4:11)?
9. To what were the Galatians about to return Gal. 4:8-11; Col. 2:16,17)?
10. How had the Galatians first received Paul (Gal. 4:11-15)?
11. What was the “infirmity” of the flesh suffered by Paul and why (verses 13, 15)?
12. What would the Galatians have done for Paul (Gal. 4:15)?
13. Can you name the two sons of Abraham (Gal. 4:22; Gen. 16:15; 21:2)?
14. Mount Sinai represents what (Gal. 4:25)?
15. What is called “Jerusalem that is above”? (Gal. 4:26)?
16. What prophecy is quoted from Isaiah 54:1?
17. In what eight ways do Hagar and Ishmael represent Judaism?
18. In what eight ways do Sarah and Isaac represent Christianity?
19. Casting out the “bondwoman and her son” represents what (Gal. 4:30)?
20. What inescapable conclusion does Paul reach in Gal. 4:31?

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Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 17
Galatians 5

Page 1
Memory Verse: Galatians 5:22-23

Memory Verse:

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

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

Paul now passes to the PRACTICAL PORTION of Galatians. The first two chapters were concerned with Paul’s apostolic authority, PURELY PERSONAL (Gal. 1, 2). The second two chapters were POLEMICAL (Gal, 3, 4); the last two chapters are PRACTICAL (Gal. 5, 6).

Never did 149 short verses contain such a statement and defense of Christian liberty. The first two chapters state the doctrine of Christian Liberty; the second two DEFEND IT; the third two APPLY IT. The first two present THE APOSTLE OF LIBERTY”; the second two “THE DOCTRINE OF LIBERTY;” the third two “THE LIFE OF LIBERTY.”

I. Christian Liberty in Peril (Galatians 5:1-12)

A. Liberty in Christ is real (Galatians 5:1).

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty...” (Gal. 5:1): Because we “are not children of the bondwoman, BUT OF THE FREE” (Gal. 4:31), we are exhorted to “stand fast” in the freedom Christ has given us. FREEDOM IS THE RIGHTFUL HERITAGE OF CHRISTIANS. Christ died to “redeem” us, to SECURE FREEDOM for us (Gal. 4:5-7).

“Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”; Shall the Galatians forfeit all these rights? Shall they renounce their liberty? Shall they bind upon themselves the fetters of the old law? Paul urges them not to take again the “yoke of bondage,” the law of Moses as a GROUND OF ACCEPTANCE with God, OR as a MEANS OF SALVATION. Justification is by FAITH in Christ, apart from the law-works (Gal. 3:24-27). They had formerly been in “bondage” unto them “which by nature are NO GODS” (Gal. 4:9). Heathen practices and customs had enslaved them. Ancient or modern ritualism is really a form of heathenism. To try to save oneself by mere outer ceremonies, apart from a genuine inner change of heart, is merely a form of paganism.

B. The Galatians are warned of their danger (Galatians 5:2-6).

“Behold... if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing” (Gal. 5:2): The Galatians had not been asked to surrender their Christian faith, but to ADD TO THE WORK OF CHRIST THEIR OWN KEEPING OF THE LAW AS A SECOND GROUND OF THEIR ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. There are NOT TWO GROUNDS of SALVATION, two ways of life, and two ways of justification. Paul frankly warns them that IF THEY TURN TO THE LAW METHOD OF justification, “CHRIST WILL PROFIT YOU NOTHING”! There can be no compromise and no divided allegiance (Matt. 12:30).

“For... every man that is circumcised... debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:3): Here the term “circumcision” denotes the whole legal sys-tem of closes. These Gentile Christians could not BECOME Jews

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and remain Christians. It would be a proof of trust in Moses rather than Christ, in the LAW rather than in the GOSPEL. The LAW-WAY demanded perfection. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL THINGS... of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10). Peter confessed that “neither our fathers nor we were able” to keep the law perfectly (Acts 15:10).

“Christ is become of no effect unto you... ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4): If they seek justification by law by circumcision, they “have FINISHED WITH CHRIST; you have lost your hold upon God's favor” (Goodspeed). “No effect,” or severed, means “to be made nothing” and “to be cut off.” To LEAVE the SPHERE OF GRACE in Christ and take your stand in the SPHERE OF LAW is to cease being a Christian. Such a course CANCELS our relation to Christ.

“For we through the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:5) The true Christian does not trust in carnal ordinances, but through the strength of the Spirit of God “wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” The Holy Spirit, or Comforter, is an “earnest” or down payment of our heavenly hope (II Cor. 3:5-8). The Christian's future is bright (II Tim. 4:8).

“For in Christ Jesus...” (Gal. 5:6) It makes no difference in God's sight what a man has been, whether a circumcised Jew, or an uncircumcised Gentile. There is NO MERIT in EITHER CONDITION. What matters is FAITH in CHRIST that WORKS “by LOVE”! This is “The moral dynamic of Paul's conception of FREEDOM FROM LAW.”

C. False teachers condemned (Galatians 5:7-12).

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you...?” (Gal. 5:7) They had made a noble START in their Christian lives. Someone came along who persuaded them to STOP RUNNING. Paul borrows a metaphor from the Greek footraces. Compare Gal. 2:2; I Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1. The “WHO” of course refers to the Judaizers who tried to get them to ADD CIRCUMCISION TO THE GOSPEL AS A BASIS OF SALVATION. Those who so advised the Galatians were not God-inspired (verse 8).

“Hindered”: A military term. It “indicates the embarrassment of an army's progress by tearing down bridges.”

“A little leaven...” (Gal. 5:9) This proverb Paul has in I Cor. 5:6. “Leaven” in both Old and New Testaments is a common symbol, usually denoting EVIL INFLUENCE. The great majority of the Corinthian church had held to the truth of God, but a SMALL PORTION of the church had listened to the EVIL TEACHERS. An EVIL MINORITY IS LEFT UNCHECKED will menace the majority.

“I have confidence in you through the Lord...” (Gal. 5:10): Paul feels that great majority of the church was still loyal and true to Christ, and to Paul. It seems unlikely that Paul knew precisely who the evil leader was. “He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.” The apostle commits the evil workers of God's judgment and the discipline of the church on the ringleader!

“And I, brethren... why do I yet suffer persecution?” (Gal. 5:11): “Some of the Judaizers even circulated the slander that Paul preached circumcision to ruin his influence.” Paul had Timothy circumcised as a matter of EXPEDIENCY (Acts 16:1-3). He REFUSED to circumcise Titus when the Judaizers demanded it AS A CONDITION OF SALVATION (Gal. 2:1-5). If this charge is true, why did the Jews everywhere persecute him?

“Then is the offense of the cross ceased.” Paul taught that the “WHOLE Jewish SYSTEM OF ORDINANCES PERISHED AT THE CROSS” (Col. 2:13-15). The cross is the BASIS of our atonement, or justification with God. The Jews hated this teaching. Had Paul actually rejected the cross and preached circumcision (as his enemies said he did), he would have been a hero to the Jews!

“I would that they were even cut off which trouble you.” (Gal. 5:12) Paul wishes they would cut themselves off from the church entirely. Today we need a clear call to all Christians to **STAND FAST IN THEIR LIBERTY** in Christ. Let us deliver men from legalism, old or new. Release men from the idol of a creed whose mere repetition and defense **CAN NEVER SAVE!** We ought to call men back to the cross, and point them toward the **LIVING CHRIST**.

II. Liberty in Christ Is Not Lawlessness (Galatians 5:13-26)

A. Remember the reality of liberty (Galatians 5:13-16)

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty...” (Gal. 5:13): “Ye” is emphatic. It is in contrast to the evil teachers who would **BIND A YOKE OF LAW UPON THEM**. Paul bitterly rebukes the troublemakers who were unsettling the Galatians Christians. By way of contrast he addresses his readers with the tender title of “brethren.”

“Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh...” Christians are not to **USE THEIR LIBERTY** in Christ **AS A SPRING BOARD FOR LICENSE**. “Do not think because you are free that you are therefore **FREE TO DO EVIL**.” Liberty so easily turns to license. “By love serve one another” instead of always insisting on one’s rights.

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Gal. 5:14): This supreme moral principle is embedded in the very heart of the ancient legal code in Lev. 19:18. The **ESSENCE** of the moral law is **SUMMED UP IN A SINGLE COMMAND**, “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” This “is the moral law is **PROOF OF THE NEW LOVE AND LIFE**” (Rom. 13:8; compare Matt. 22:39).

“But if ye bite and devour one another...” (Gal. 5:15) “Bite” pictures the fierce and cruel manner of their contentions. “Devour” indicates the destruction in which these result. If Christians fight like cats and dogs the result will not be victory for either side, but extinction for the cause of Christ. “Take heed!” remember that mutual anger and hate can only result in mutual destruction. Recall the “famous story of two snakes that grabbed each other by the tail and each swallowed the other?”

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:16): The true Christian is under the Holy Spirit of God, and does not practice such things. To “**WALK**” is to pursue one’s daily course, to accomplish one’s usual tasks, to meet inevitable temptations, duties, sorrows and joys. The entire life of the believer is to be lived “**BY THE SPIRIT**,” under His guidance and direction, and by His aid, help and power.

B. The Christian is in a fight against the “flesh” (Galatians 5:17).

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:17): Christ and Satan long for the possession of the city of Man Soul as Bunyan shows. “Flesh” and “Spirit” are lined up in conflict in a **SPIRITUAL DUEL**. It will last as long as we are in the flesh, The old appetites, weaknesses and tendencies remain in the heart even of a true Child of God. The “flesh” strives against the control of the “Spirit,” and the “Spirit” against the control of the “flesh,” “that ye may not do the things that ye would.” Either defeat or victory is possible.

C. To remember our liberty helps us overcome (Galatians 5:18),

“But if ye be led of the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:18) “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). This frees us from the law. As Christians we are not condemned simply because an evil desire of the flesh comes to us. **EVIL DESIRE** is **NOT A SIN UNLESS IT IS CHERISHED**. “You can’t keep the birds of heaven from flying over your heads, but you can keep them from building nests in your hair.”

D. Consequences of a victory of the “flesh” or “Spirit” (Galatians 5:19-23).

1. “The works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21).

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a. Sensual sins (Gal. 5:19).

“Now the works of the flesh...” (Gal. 5:19): “Works” is plural. It is used to show the chaos of vices when the “flesh” is unchecked. Everybody can recognize such evil. The list of fleshly vices is not complete, but it is comprehensive.

Ancient writers were fond of lists of VICES and VIRTUES. See Stalker’s sermons of THE SEVEN CARDINAL VIRTUES and THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

“Adultery.” This is sexual intercourse, usually of a man, married or unmarried, always with the wife of another. Forbidden by the law (Ex, 20:14; Deut. 5:18), Jesus broadens its application to include the lustful look that betrays an adulterous heart (Matt. 5:27-30). Jesus teaches that such evils as adultery come from the heart (Matt. 15:19), and will forgive one taken in the very act of adultery (John 8:3-11).

“Fornication.” This is the unlawful intercourse of any unwed person.

“Uncleanness and lasciviousness.” Impurity and lewdness, the last of as which denotes open, shameless indulgence in impurity.

b. Idolatry (Gal. 5:20).

“Idolatry...” (Gal. 5:20): Putting anything in the place of the true and living God.

“Witchcraft”: Sorcery or magic, whether a superstition or deception, was prevalent in the entire ancient world.

c. Violations of the law of love (Gal. 5:20, 21a).

“Hatred...” (Gal. 5:20): This third group contains nine of the “works of the flesh” here enumerated. All have their common origin in a heart empty of love. “Hatred” or ‘enmities” are private feuds which may break out in open “variance” or “strife.” “Emulations” or “jealousies” may be secret, but their power is almost limitless, and morally devastating. “Wraths” describe those storms of anger which if uncontrolled become almost demonic.” “Strife, seditions, heresies” are “factions, divisions, parties” and indicate the disturbing, disrupting tendencies of “the flesh” which may destroy the peace of a home, a church, or a community. “Envyings” de-note not merely the bitter rivalry of “jealousies,” but also the desire to deprive another of his place or possessions and possibly the settled rancor which seeks revenge and often results from the party strife in connection with which it is here named. Think of putting “murders” with such sins as “strife” and “envyings”!

d. Intemperance (Gal. 5:21b).

“Drunkenness...” (Gal. 5:21b): The last group includes sins of excess. “Revelings” denote the open and riotous orgies from which “drunkenness” may result. “Komoi” means drinking parties like those in honour of Bacchus (Rom. 13:13; I Pet. 4:3), The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but it is representative. Those who keep on doing such things cannot expect to be saved.

2. “The fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

a. The queen of graces (Gal. 5:22a).

“Love, joy, peace”: The “fruit” of the Spirit is singular. The Spirit unites and produces fruit in the Christian. The beautiful tree of fruit that Paul pictures here has nine luscious fruits on it.

“Love” is AGAPE, the grace which works out the whole law, and with “joy” and “peace” turns the thought toward God.

b. Attention toward our fellow men (Gal. 5:22b).

“Longsuffering” denotes that patient endurance under continual provocation that Paul praises in his hymn of love (I Cor. 13). “Gentleness” or “Kindness” denotes benevolence of disposition, indicating a desire

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for the welfare of those who are taxing our patience. “Goodness” is love in action. It secures the welfare of others.

c. Attention' to oneself (Gal. 5:22b, 23).

“Faith” (Gal. 5:22b): Confidence in God. Fidelity makes one true to his promise and faithful to his task.

“Meekness” (verse 23): Meekness is not weakness, mere mildness, or lack of spirit. It requires faith and courage to imitate “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (II Cor. 10:1).

“Temperance” This is self-control. This implies the rational restraint of all the natural impulses. You do not need law to control a man thus walking in the Spirit.

E. The “flesh” belongs to the past (Galatians 5:24-26).

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh...” (Gal. 5:24) It does not say, “They that are Christ's SHOULD CRUCIFY the flesh. When we accepted Christ those EVIL IMPULSES and APPETITES which SOUGHT TO CONTROL US WERE REGARDED AS NAILED TO THE CROSS. “I have been crucified WITH CHRIST; nevertheless I live...” (Gal. 2:20). We have DIED WITH CHRIST, been BURIED, and RISEN, NOT TO LIVE OUR OWN LIVES, BUT CHRIST’S (see Rom. 6:2-11). To “live in the Spirit,” and “walk in the Spirit” pictures the activity of one who is MAKING PROGRESS on a journey, or is pressing toward a goal (verse 25). “Let us not become vainglorious so as to compete with each other and to envy one another” (verse 26). Thus shall we enjoy TRUE FREEDOM, and LIBERTY shall never become a LICENSE to evil!

QUESTIONS

1. Can you give a simple outline to Galatians?
2. From what has Christ “made us free” (Gal. 5:1; John 8:36; 14:6)?
3. What is the three-fold result of trying to keep the law (Gal. 5:2-4)?
4. Who tried to get the Galatians to “stop running” with Christ (Gal. 5:6-7; 2:2; 1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1)?
5. Is it possible for one today to “FALL FROM GRACE” (Gal. 5:4-8)?
6. What does a “little leaven” do (Gal. 5:8-9; I Cor. 5:6)?
7. Since Paul believed the Galatians were “saved,” what “confidence” did he have (Gal. 5:10)?
8. What trouble had these false teachers caused, and what did Paul wish for them (Gal. 5:11, 12)?
9. For what purpose may we not use our “LIBERTY” in Christ (Gal. 5:13)? What master principle must govern Christian “liberty”?
10. What is the biggest word in heaven’s vocabulary (Gal. 5:14)?
11. If “love” is absent, what happens among Christians (Gal. 5:15)? Where mutual love reigns, rather than law, what happens among believers (Col. 2:2)?
12. How will the conquest over the sensual be gained (Gal. 5:16, 17)?
13. What is true of those who are “led of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:18)?
14. Into what four classes may “the works of the flesh” be divided (Gal. 5:19-21)? Can you name them?
15. What is said of those who keep on doing such things (Gal. 5:21)?
16. Into what three classes may “the fruit of the Spirit” be placed (Gal. 5:22, 23)?
17. What is the “queen of graces” out of which all the others spring (Gal. 5:22, 14)?
18. In what way is the Christian to regard his old life of the “flesh” (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:6, 11)?
19. How may we be empowered to keep the old nature in the place of death (Gal’ 5:24; Rom. 8:13)?
20. Since the Holy Spirit has given us life, what are we to do (Gal. 5:25, 26)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 18
Galatians 6

Page 1
Memory Verse: Galatians 6:6,7

Memory Verse:

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be no deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:6, 7).

SOWING AND REAPING

Having dealt with the conduct of LIBERTY thus broadly, the apostle now makes some detailed application of the principles enunciated.

All who are truly Christian “LIVE” and “ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT” (Gal. 5:25). They will treasure their liberty in Christ and not turn it into license to make trouble (Gal. 5:26).

In this last chapter of Galatians, we see

I. Grace in Action (Galatians 6:1-10)

A. It bears the burdens of moral fault (Galatians 6:1-5).

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault...” (Gal. 6:1): Literally, this means a falling aside, a slip, or a lapse-- not a willful, premeditated sin. The man has been caught “red-handed” in the act of sin. There is not a doubt of his guilt. The sin is grievous. Peter was taken by surprise; a little denial grew into “cursing and swearing.” (Matt. 26:69-75) It may be the sin of pride, or quick temper, or envy, or jealousy.

“Ye which are spiritual”: Those who walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 22-25). They are SPIRITUAL EXPERTS IN MENDING SOULS.

“Restore such an one...” A word for mending a net, or setting of a limb. Such action requires “gentleness” (Gal. 5:22). The aim is to lead an erring sinner back to purity and service. This requires all the grace God can give us.

“Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted”: Pride and self-conceit hinder such a ministry of “restoring” the sinner. We ourselves may be caught by temptation and sin (I Cor. 10:12, 13). Each one of us is to do this. Paul uses the singular, not the plural.

“Bear ye one another's burdens...” (Gal. 6:2): The burdens that Paul has in mind are the burdens of moral fault. None are so pathetic, none press so heavily on the soul, as the burdens of detected sin and conscious shame.

If YOU SEE a brother or sister in Christ about to stumble under his burden, hold him up! “By love SERVE ONE ANOTHER” (Gal. 5:13, 14). Ye must SHARE ANY DISTRESSING BURDEN that threatens to overcome a brother. This “fulfills the law of Christ,” the law of love which Christ Himself obeyed (John 13:34; 15:12).

“For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” (Gal. 6:3) A man who thinks he is so good he cannot be tempted, or so strong he can't fall is sure rudely to be awakened (I Cor. 10:12, 13). He is a zero, not a “big number!” He “deceives” no one but himself.

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“But let every man prove his own work...” (Gal. 6:4) In comparison to a weak, fallen brother, a man may pride himself upon his own moral attainment. He has little or no basis for self-congratulation. He ought to “test” or “put his own work to the proof” in the light of his God-given talents and opportunities.

“For every man shall bear his own burden” (Gal. 6:5): In the light of his own responsibility to God, a man should test himself and BEAR HIS OWN BURDEN OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY. There is no contradiction in verses 2 and 5. Both statements are absolutely true. A man is responsible before God for “carrying his own load” (Goodspeed).

B. It bears the burdens of temporal needs (Gal. 6:6-10).

“Let him that is taught in the word...” (Gal. 6:6): In the early church there were leaders whose duty it was to give instruction in the gospel, to explain and enforce it. “The elders who conduct their office well are worthy of DOUBLE HONOR, particularly those who labor in preaching and teaching” (I Tim. 5:17).

Those who were “taught in the word,” were to “communicate” or CONTRIBUTE for the time of the teacher (Burton). This teaching class arose early in the New Testament church (I Thess. 5:12; I Cor. 12:28; I Cor. 14:19). “And he (God) gave some... pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11, 12).

“Even so hath the Lord ORDAINED that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” Paul told the Corinthians (I Cor. 9:14), If a preacher faithfully preaches and lives the message, a local church is accountable to God fully to SUPPORT HIM. He, who seeks only to be a sponge and soak up everything, but give nothing, is guilty of robbing God and God’s preacher – a double robbery.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked...” (Gal. 6:7) Men are often “deceived,” and “led astray” in these matters. “Mocked” comes from ‘mukter’ (nose) and “means to turn the nose up at one.” That is done towards God, but never without punishment. Men think they BEAT GOD, and GOD’S MAN OUT OF RIGHTFUL SUPPOSE, but such men are self-deceived.

“The deacon prayed for pastor dear who’d served his church for many a year,
‘Lord, keep him humble, keep him poor, As were the blessed saints of yore,
Who never had on earth a part but lived for heaven with single heart.’
The deacon paused, then mild and meek, went on in words astute and sleek,
‘You keep him humble, for you know we’ll do the rest and keep him poor.’”

Some deacons and members pray this way down in Tennessee where I was born and reared, but surely there are none like them in your church!

“For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” The LAW of the HARVEST is true not only in the SPIRITUAL REALM, but it is true in the PHYSICAL, NATURAL WORLD as well. It is impossible for men to “sow” stingy support of God’s work and worker and expect to “reap” a bountiful harvest of spiritual understanding, love, joy and peace! “Nature writes in one’s body the penalty of sin.” The delirium tremens of the alcoholic on the one hand, and the purity of the aged saint on the other, illustrate the law of “sowing and reaping.”

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall... reap corruption” (Gal. 6:8): By “flesh” is here meant the impulses and tendencies of human nature unrenewed by the Spirit of God, and OPPOSED TO THE WILL OF GOD. The text includes those ATTITUDES and INCLINATIONS THE MIND that impel a man TO SELFISHNESS, to FORGETFULNESS OF OTHERS, and to DISREGARD GOD. Such actions that result

from “the flesh” always result in MORAL WEAKNESS and in SINFUL TRANSGRESSION. The result must be “corruption,” physical and moral decay. Talk to your doctor about the penalty of sin in the body,

“He that soweth to the Spirit...” To “sow to the Spirit” is to “walk” and “live” under the Spirit’s direction (Gal, 5:16, 25).

“And let us not be weary in well doing...” (Gal. 6:9): No matter what the “well doing” may be, whether bearing the burden of another’s fault, or the financial needs of a “teaching” brother, “do not weaken.” Continue your “sowing” to the Spirit.” To faint,” means to withdraw from the field of harvest in discouragement, or weakness. Victory will come to each one of us IF WE ARE FAITHFUL TO CHRIST (I Cor. 15:57; Rev. 2:10c).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men...” (Gal. 6:10): “Going good” is well doing, the practice of “what is right” or “beneficial for everyone.” We must go about “doing good” (Acts 10:38) to the unthankful, and the godless. The Christian rule is to do good to all, “but supremely toward the members of the family of faith.”

II. Glorifying in the Cross (Galatians 6:11-18).

A. The legalists rebuked (Galatians 6:11-13).

“Ye see how large a letter I have written...” (Gal. 6:11): Paul took the pen from his amanuensis or secretary and wrote this last portion of the letter “with mine own hand,” (Revised Version). “See what large letters I make” (Goodspeed), not “how large a letter.” The entire epistle has only 149 verses, divided into six short chapters.

“As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh...” (Gal. 4:12); The Judaizers who sought to have the Galatians adopt the Mosaic ritual of circumcision were inspired by SELFISH AND COWARDLY MOTIVES. They did not even “keep the law” of Moses. They were number-crazy that they might BOAST OF HOW MANY GENTILE CHRISTIANS THEY HAD MADE INTO LITTLE JEWS (verse 13)!

B. Paul gloried in the cross (Galatians 6:14-16).

“But God forbid that I should glory...” (Gal. 6:14): “I never want to boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Goodspeed). What a contrast to the evil Judaizers!

“Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me...” : The “world” to which Paul refers first of all is the whole world of Jewish rites and ceremonies. Paul has identified himself with Christ and he has found that the death of Christ is itself with Christ and he has found that the death of Christ is itself sufficient for those who put their trust in him to secure pardon for sin and acceptance with God. To this FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST Paul need and can add NOTHING! Because of this the whole sphere of ceremonies and rites has LOST ALL ATTRACTION. They appear to him as SOMETHING DEAD AND CRUCIFIED. This “world” has lost all claim upon Paul. He has been “crucified” to the world; he died to sinful lusts (Gal. 2:20).

A dear young woman was once a thorough worldling. She was brought to a “saving knowledge” of the Lord Jesus. Her friends came on her birthday one evening to give her a surprise party and to take her a questionable place of worldly amusement. She said, “It is good of you to think of me, but I could not go with you; I never go to such a place.”

“Nonsense,” they said; “you have often gone with us.”

“But,” she said, “I have BURIED THE GIRL THAT USED TO GO TO THOSE PLACES.”

“Not I, but Christ liveth in me”!

Christian baptism is the SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD that crucified our Lord (Rom. 6:1-11).

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“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing...” (Gal. 6:15); Paul’s boast and glory are in the cross of Christ. Through Christ he has become a “new creature” (see II Cor. 5:17). It does not matter whether one is a Jew or Gentile. It is essential that one be a “new creature,” a Christian!

“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace...” (Gal. 6:16): The great principle of glorying in the cross makes an obedient believer into a “new creature”. That really matters (II Cor. 10:13, 15). Upon such believers Paul invokes the “peace and mercy” of God.

“Upon the Israel of God.” Paul indicates all that put their trust in Christ. They are the true “Israel.” They are the spiritual descendents of Abraham and Jacob. The very word itself is a rebuke to the Galatian heresy. Those converts were being tempted to believe that the true “heirs of the promise” were the Christians who might also adopt the Mosaic ritual. Paul insists that the TRUE SPIRITUAL ISRAEL CONSISTS OF THOSE WHO GLORY IN THE CROSS and in the power of the risen Christ!

C. The marks of a genuine apostle (Galatians 6:17).

“Henceforth let no man trouble me...” (Gal. 6:17): Three classes of men in the ancient world were branded in their bodies: SOLDIERS, SLAVES and DEVOTEES. Paul declares that on his body there are “the MARKS OF JESUS.” He refers to the SCARS that had been left by the scourgings, stonings, arid toils that he had endured for the sake of Christ, They prove he belongs to Christ. The scars of his body indicate he belongs wholly to his plaster. Paul is His soldier. He is His slave. He is His devotee. “I bear in my body the brand marks of Jesus' ownership!” His assailants should henceforth leave him in peace.

D. The benediction (Galatians 6:18).

“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen” (Gal. 6:18): With “grace,” Paul closes the epistle. “Grace is unmerited favor,” not the old law-works. He still calls them “brethren” in spite of all the severe things he had told them.

QUESTIONS

1. What should be done for a brother who is “caught red-handed” in sin (Gal. 6:1)?
2. What kind of Christian is to deal with the erring brother (I Cor. 2:14-3:3)?
3. Bearing “one another's burdens” does what (Gal. 6:2)?
4. A “man” who “thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing” does what (Gal. 6:3)?
6. Whose work should we seek to “prove” (Gal. 6:4)?
7. How does a “burdened brother” (Gal. 6:2-5) differ from one “over-taken in a fault” (Gal. 6:1)?
8. When our “burdens” are too heavy, what is the Christian to do (Psalm 55:22; I Peter 5:7)?
9. Who is ever ready to carry the HEAVY END of such burdens (Matt. 11:28, 29)?
10. What is the Christian’s responsibility to one who teaches him the Word of God (Gal. 6:6; I Cor. 9:7-14)?
11. Is Galatians 6:7, 8 written to believers or unbelievers?
12. What does one always “reap” in both the physical and spiritual realms (Gal. 6:7)?
13. What does it mean to “sow to the flesh” (Gal. 6:7; 5:19-21)?
14. What does it mean to “SOW TO THE SPIRIT” (Gal. 6:8; 5:16,22,23,25):
15. What is the one exception to this law of “sowing” and “reaping” (I Cor. 11:31, 32)?
16. Why should we never “be weary in well doing” (Gal. 6:9)? To whom should we “do good” (Gal. 6:10)?
17. Why had the Judaizers urged the Galatians to be circumcised (Gal. 6:12, 13)?
18. In what one thing did Paul dare to “boast” (Gal. 6:14)? What must be true of all who are in Christ Jesus (Gal. 6:15; II Cor. 5:17)?
19. To whom does Paul refer as the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16; 3:7; 5:6)?
20. What were the “marks” of the Lord Jesus borne by Paul (Gal. 6:17; II Cor. 11:24-33)?

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Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 19

Page 1

Ephesians 1

Memory Verse: Ephesians 1:3

Memory Verse:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

A WONDERFUL STORY

Ephesus means “Desirable,” It was a Grecian city on the Asiatic coast, a great commercial city of the first century. It was the capital of the Roman province that was called by the name of ASIA. The city lay upon the edge of a plain that extended to the sea. When its harbor silted up, Smyrna replaced it as the outlet and Key City of the Meander valley trade route.

The Temple of Diana

“Diana of the Ephesians” is mentioned only in Acts 19:24-35, is Artemis in the Greek, and called one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Her silver “shrines” (Acts 19:24) were little “temples” containing an image of Artemis as imagined by the Asiatics, a combination of the Greek virgin goddess with the many-breasted and lewd Semitic moon goddess Ashtoreth. For the Ephesians, Artemis was the great Asiatic-nursing mother of gods, men, animals, and plants, and was the patroness of the sexual instinct. Her special worship was centered in the great temple at Ephesus.

The Church of Ephesus

Paul founded the church of Ephesus. About the close of his second missionary journey, he paused there, and left Priscilla and Aquila to follow up his beginning (Acts 18:19-21).

On his THIRD MISSIONARY Journey, Paul spent “three years” (Acts 20:31) at Ephesus (Acts 18:23-20:38). His preaching stirred up the whole province (Acts 19:17-20), and finally caused such trouble that he had to leave the city. Paul helped this church by seeing that they were supplied with the truth (I Tim. 1:3). Later he met with the elders of the church at Miletus when on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17f).

The Book

Ephesians is comprised of 155 verses, one of the four “Prison Epistles,” written from Paul’s Roman imprisonment, 61-63 A.D., the others being Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Three of these, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, were written at the same time, and carried by the same messengers (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7-9; Philemon 10-12). There was apparently another that is now not in existence. (Col. 4:16)

This book of six chapters was written to meet certain difficulties which in here arising in the church. It shows that the gospel was not an afterthought but that God had planned at the proper time to send His Son and to establish His church.

In chapters 1 to 3, Paul shows that the church was FOREORDAINED OF GOD, and that JEW AND GENTILE ARE ONE IN CHRIST. In chapters 4 to 6, Paul gives a practical application of unity, love, newness of life, walking in the strength of the Lord, and in the armor of God.

God's glorious purpose and projection is The Wonderful Story of chapter 1.

I. Presentation of the Christian's Call (Ephesians 1:1-14)

A. The salutation (Ephesians 1:1-2).

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ..." (Eph. 1:1): It was the ancient custom always to place the name of the writer at the BEGINNING rather than at the end as it is with us. Paul is named as the author,

"By the will of God": He reminded the Ephesians that he was an apostle by the "will of God," and not of man. He was DIVINELY CHOSEN for his work (Acts 26:16-18). He was now in prison at Rome, and calls himself "Paul the aged" (Philemon 9).

"To the saints that are at Ephesus": In the early church all Christians were called "saints". The primary meaning of the word is separation, "Saints" were set apart unto God, They were "God's people."

"At Ephesus" is not in some of the most ancient manuscripts. It is thought that, probably, it was intended as a Circular Letter to the Asian churches, Tychicus bearing a number of copies, with space for each city to insert its own name. This would account for the lack of personal greetings, with which most of Paul's letters abound.

"Grace... and peace" (Eph. 1:2): "Grace" is the river flowing from the heart of God. "Peace" is the consciousness of the trusting soul.

B. God's eternal choice (Ephesians 1:3-6).

"Blessed be the God and Father..." (Eph. 1:3): Our word "eulogize" is derived from this word. Its primary meaning is "to praise." God us. "All spiritual blessings" denote that all of them come from God. He has not withheld any good thing from those in Christ.

"In heavenly places": "In the heavenly realm" (Goodspeed). It occurs in four other places (Eph. 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). In Eph. 2:6 the believer is conceived as ALREADY SEATED WITH CHRIST! Heaven is the real abode of the citizen of Christ's kingdom (Phil 3:20) who is a stranger on earth (Eph. 2:19).

"According as he hath chosen us in him..." (Eph. 1:4): God's eternal purpose is magnificently summarized in verses 3-14 concerning the REDEMPTION, ADOPTION, FORGIVENESS, and SEALING OF A PEOPLE for God's own possession, DETERMINED FROM ETERNITY, and now being brought to pass through the effective exercise of God's will.

"Chosen" does not affirm that God CHOSE SOME INDIVIDUALS and REJECTED OTHERS, but that before the world was created, before there was Jew or Gentile, "God chose to have a people for himself, the whole church of Christ, a covenant people confined to no one earthly race."

"That we should be holy": God chose us that we might be "holy." Holiness is a proof that a church is a "chosen" church, a genuine church of Christ.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ..." (Eph. 1:5) "Predestinated" is "having foreordained" in the Revised Version. God defined or decided beforehand that we, the church of Jesus Christ, should be adopted as His children. The entire line of argument is general, not particular.

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“According to the good pleasure of his will”: This act of deciding before hand was due simply to God’s sovereign will. His will was the cause. God’s choice for “every creature” (Mark 16:15, 16) to compose the church, was not due to human will or merit. God’s decision had its origin solely in “the kind intent of his will, goodness and love.”

“To the praise of the glory of his grace...” (Eph. 1:6): The ultimate purpose of “the kind intent” of God’s decision was that His grace might be manifested and adored. “Glory” denotes “manifested excellence.” “Grace” signifies “undeserved favor,” or “unmerited bounty.” Its supreme example is found in the redeeming love of God toward mankind (John 3:16).

“Grace... hath made us accepted in the beloved”: In Christ, “This is my BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13).

C. God's elect children (Ephesians 1:7-12).

“In whom we have redemption...” (Eph. 1:7): We are in bondage to sin. Christ redeems us or ransoms us. The price paid for our redemption is “his blood (Matt. 20:28; I Tim, 2:6; Acts 20:28; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:22; I Pet. 1:18, 19), Those redeemed are forgiven.

“According to the riches of his grace”: THINK of the “riches” of God's kindness (Rom. 2:4, glory (Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:16; Phil. 4:19), fullness of understanding (Col. 2:7), riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8), and in Eph. 2:7 “the surpassing riches of grace.” What “A Wonderful Story” is God’s grace toward us (verse 8)!

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will... “ (Eph. 1:9): God’s will was once hidden, “but now is made manifest to his saints” (Col. 1:27). “Us” includes all that receive the adoption of Christ. “Mystery” is something BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION UNTIL REVEALED. When God decided that the time was FULL or RIPE, He sent Christ “in the fullness of times” (verse 10) that “everything in heaven and on earth should be unified in Christ” (see Matt. 28:18-20; Rev. 5:13).

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance...” (Eph. 1:11): We are IN CHRIST made the heritage of God, or God’s part. God predestinated us, THE CHURCH, to the ADOPTION OF SONS and to be His heritage.

“That we should be to the praise of his glory...” (Eph. 1:12): God has done all this for the purpose of “winning praise for His glory.”

“Who first trusted in Christ”: Paul described himself and his fellow Jewish Christians as those “who had before hoped in Christ.” This hope was unknown to the Gentiles. Now the Gentiles HAVE THE HOPE in Christ.

D. Jew and Gentile receive the sealing pledge of the Holy Spirit Eph. 1:13, 14).

“In whom ye also trusted...” (Eph. 1:13): “Ye” refers to Gentile believers like most of the Ephesians who also trusted after they “heard the word of truth.” “We” refers to Jewish believers.

“Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” After they were converted, the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon them. On the day of Pentecost Peter told the believers, “REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). This was “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4). The seal was attached to a letter or legal document to authenticate it to the world. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, was God’s authentication to

the world that the converts to Christ were accepted as His children. The presence of the new Spirit was shown by a new life exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

“Which is the earnest of our inheritance...” (Eph. 1:14): “Earnest” money is a small part of the purchase money given in hand to BIND THE BARGAIN. God’s seal or “earnest” of the Holy Spirit in His adopted children is a small part given now of what He will give us in the future. After we are completely redeemed from the grave we shall have the “purchased possession” or FULL POSSESSION of our inheritance with God in Christ (John 14:1-6).

II. A Prayer That We Understand God's Purpose in Calling Us (Eph. 1:15-21)

A. Praise for the called (Ephesians 1:15, 16).

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith...” (Eph. 1:15): This verse has been used to show that Paul was not personally acquainted with those to whom wrote, and hence the letter could not be addressed to thee Ephesians. However, he used SIMILAR LANGUAGE of PHILEMON, one of his own converts (Philemon 5)! The language is natural if Paul left Ephesus in the spring of 57 AD and wrote this letter about the close of 62 AD (Coneybear and Howson), MORE THAN FIVE YEARS LATER. It is obvious that during this period he could only know of the “faith” and “love unto all the saints” BY WHAT HE HEARD.

“Cease not to give thanks for you...” (Eph. 1: 16) Because he heard a favorable report.

B. Prayer for insight and understanding (Ephesians 1:17-21).

“That... the Father... may give unto you” (Eph. 1:17): “That” introduces the things for which he prayed God in their behalf. The prayer is addressed to “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.” Such a description of God is not inconsistent with the highest view of the person of God’s Son. Jesus never addressed God with the words, “Our Father,” though he taught men so to pray (Matt. 6:9). He did recognize His Father as His God, and He thus addressed Him. He derived His life from the Father while at the same time He was one in the same divine being. From eternity he was “WITH GOD” -- HE WAS GOD (John 1:1). Yet God sent Him, the Word, into the world (John 1:14). God heard Him when He prayed, God exalted Him, and received Him back into the glory that had been His before the foundation of the world. There is sublime majesty in the title, “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

God is also addressed as “the Father of glory.” This is not merely “the glorious Father,” but “the Father, to whom glory belongs,” of whom glory is the characteristic feature – the Father most glorious, the all-glorious Father. It is to such a Being that Paul offers his petition.

“God... give unto you the spirit of wisdom” (Eph. 1:17): This is a gift of the Spirit. “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom” (I Cor. 12:8). Divine wisdom works wisdom in Christian believers.

“And revelation”: The Spirit that reveals a knowledge of God and spiritual mysteries. This Spirit would enable them better to comprehend the ‘mystery’ of God, the divine plan for HUMAN REDEMPTION in a better knowledge of Him.

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...” (Eph. 1:18): Paul prays that God will “grant you illumined eyes of the heart.” The spiritual “heart” was regarded as the seat of the affections, intellect and the will. His request is for an AWAKENED and an ENLARGED MORAL PERCEPTION, for a clearer spiritual vision.

“That ye may know”: Have a fuller comprehension of three things:

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“The hope of his calling”; To which God has called them – eternal life. God calls us to a NEW LIFE, in Christ (1 Pet. 3:9; Acts 17:30, 31).

“The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”: The apostle wants them to appreciate “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” The Christian Church is the SPECIAL POSSESSION OF GOD. He has made the church HIS HERITAGE. It was purchased with the blood of His Son (I Pet. 1:18, 19). It was called into being by the work of His Spirit. Let us appreciate the origin, influence and eternal destiny of the CHURCH!

“And the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe” (Eph. 1:19): How great is that power? How much strength is available for the Christian in his daily living?

“His mighty power... wrought in Christ, when he raised Him from the dead...” (Eph. 1:20): The resurrection and exaltation of Christ are set forth in answer to these questions. The power which God is exerting toward the Church “is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in heaven at His right hand” (Mark 16:19; Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; Col. 3:1). His seat there indicates His glory, and also that the work of redemption has been “finished” (John 19:30)!

III. The Purpose of the Calling to Be Realized in the Relation of the Christ and the Church (Eph. 1:22, 23)

A. Christ is raised and exalted (Ephesians 1:22a).

“And hath put all things under his feet...” (Eph. 1:22a): Christ the resurrected Saviour claimed “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). Our Lord is the rightful ruler of all, and “high above all government and authority, power and lordship” (Eph. 1:21; Rom. 8:38; I Pet. 3:22; Eph. 3:10). Christ is LORD OF HIS UNIVERSE which He created (John 1:3).

B. Christ is the supreme head of the church, His body (Ephesians 1:22b).

“And gave him to be head overall things to the church...” (Eph. 1:22b) When Christ was raised from the dead (verse 20), he was exalted to be RULER over ALL THINGS, and MADE THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH. The church is a spiritual unity in vital relation with Christ. He brings the church into BEING. He is the SOURCE of ITS LIFE.

Note that this exaltation is AFTER THE CROSS AND the RESURRECTION, definitely showing that Christ’s Church was not organized until after our Lord's suffering.

C. The Church is the Fullness of the Fulfilling Christ (Ephesians 1:23).

“The church, Which is his body...” (Eph. 1:23) The church is the SPIRITUAL BODY of our Lord Jesus Christ. All things are summed up in Christ (Eph. 1:10), who is the ‘pleroma’ of God (Col. 1:19), and in particular does Christ fill the church as His body. Here in Ephesians we see the dignity of the Body of Christ which is ultimately to be FILLED with the FULLNESS (pleroma) of God (Eph. 3:19) when it grows up into the FULLNESS (pleroma) of Christ (Eph. 4:13, 16).

“I will sing the wondrous story, Of the Christ who died for me. How He left His home in glory, For the cross on Calvary. “Yes, I’ll sing the wondrous story Of the Christ who died for me. Sing it with the saints in glory, Gathered by the crystal sea.”

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QUESTIONS

1. By whom and to whom was Ephesians written (Eph. 1:1)?
2. What is the meaning of Ephesus, and what one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient world was there?
3. How and when was the church established at Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-20:1, 17-38)?
4. Can you define “grace” and “peace” (Eph. 1:2)?
5. What has been given to every true Christian (Eph. 1:3)?
6. When did God choose or decide that He would have a church composed of Jew and Gentile (Eph. 1:4)?
7. Whose decision was this (Eph. 1:5, 1, 9, 11)?
8. Does God select any individual to be saved or lost regardless of his own actions? Who determines this?
9. Where is redemption found (Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:18, 19)?
10. What has God given to each Christian (Eph. 1:13)?
11. The Holy Spirit is what part of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14)?
12. How far does “until” stretch (Eph. 1:14; 4:30; I Pet. 1:4, 5)?
13. In what way did Paul continue to remember the saints at Ephesus (Eph. 1:16)?
14. What was the first thing that Paul prayed the saints might come to discern (Eph. 1:17)?
15. What is the “hope” of God’s calling (Eph. 1:18)?
16. What second thing did Paul want us to understand (Eph. 1:18)? What does the Lord count as His precious inheritance (Deut. 32:9)? For this reason, what was the prayer of Christ (John 17:24)? Who are the most highly blessed people on earth (Psa. 33:12)?
17. Can you list the third thing Paul desired for converts (Eph. 1:19)?
18. What has been accomplished by this same “power” (Eph. 1:20)? How great is the name of the ONE who LIVES to empower us (Eph. 1:21)?
19. Where is Christ seated (Eph. 1:20)? What is “under” Christ (Eph. 1:21, 22)?
20. What is the “body” of Christ (Eph. 1:23)?

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Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 20
Ephesians 2

Page 1
Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:8-9

Memory Verse:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

A WONDERFUL BODY

The Church is the Body and Bride of Christ. As a Bride is needed for a Bridegroom, or as a body is needed for a head, so the church is needed to complete the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:22,23), so that God may be displayed in all His perfection!

Seven Steps

Our Lord took seven steps from the Throne to the death on the Cross (Phil. 2:5-11).

In Ephesians 1:20-23 there are seven great STEPS UPWARD FROM THE CROSS TO THE THRONE OF GOD. He abased Himself that He might be exalted and exalt us in Himself.

1. He rose “from the dead” (vs. 20a).
2. He is seated at God’s “right hand” in heaven (vs. 20b).
3. He is “Far above all principality, and power, and might...” (vs. 21a).
4. He has a name “above ... every name” (vs. 21b).
5. God “hath put all things under his feet” (vs. 22a).
6. He is “head over all things” (vs. 22b).
7. He is the “head over ... the church, Which is his body” (vs. 22b ,23).

The EDIFICATION or BUILDING of the Church is the subject of Ephesians 2.

I. Dead Men Recreated and Made Alive (Ephesians 2:1-10).

A. The dead material with which God works (Ephesians 2:1-3).

“And you hath he quickened...” (Eph. 2:1) The transition from “The Prayer for Knowledge” (Eph. 1:15-23) is indicated in the personal pronoun. “And you” refers to the Gentile readers. Paul has described the mighty working of God’s power in RAISING CHRIST FROM THE DEAD, and EXALTATION to the right hand of God. Now the apostle turns from the seven startling steps from the Cross to the Throne to another exhibition of power not less striking -- THE RESURRECTION OF THOSE WHO WERE SPIRITUALLY DEAD TO A NEW AND HOLY LIFE.

“Quickened”: The verb for “did he quicken” does not occur till verse 5, and then with “hemas” (us) instead of “humas” (you).

“You ... were dead in trespasses and sins”: They were spiritually dead. There can be a state of MORAL and SPIRITUAL DEATH while one is physically very much alive. Man is a complex being. He is

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described as a combination of “body, soul, and spirit.” The Prodigal Son “was DEAD” spiritually, but very alive physically (Luke 15:24). The soul that is out of communion with God is spiritually dead.

“Trespases”: Probably refers to breaking known laws.

“Sins”: The corrupt state that leads to a constantly sinful life.

Three solemn things are true of every sinner:

1. They are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).
2. They are “children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).
3. They are “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3) - - by “nature” or custom they are the “children of wrath.”

“Wherein ... ye walked according to the course of this world.” (Eph. 2:2) The Ephesian or Gentile converts had “once walked according to the course” (or age) of this world.” Both “age” and “world” refer to the same time and sphere, When we lived in sin by deliberate choice the devil was our master. We were led by his evil will. Jesus called the devil “the prince of this world” (John 16:11). The devil is real; he really works in all “children of disobedience,” those who are not saved.

“Among whom also we ... were by nature the children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3): In verses 1 and 2 the second person is used, meaning the Ephesians; here the person is changed to the first. “Ye” refers to Gentile Christians. “We” refers to Paul and his Jewish brethren. The Gentile and the Jew were controlled by sin -- vile physical sins, as well as the sins of pride, malice, and envy had full sway over both.

“And were by nature the children of wrath”: I do not believe this teaches innate, hereditary depravity. Children are not born under the “wrath” of God according to Matt. 18:3 and Matt. 19:14. “By nature” then “described custom, practice, and the unconverted state.” Both Jew and Gentile were spiritually “dead” and “walking” in evil disobedience to God’s will. The Jews did this IN SPITE OF THE LAW OF MOSES. The Gentile did it without such a revelation (Rom. 1:18-32). “The state of nature (in this passage) is the unconverted state.”

Three great powers that affect the sinner:

1. The “course of this world” (Eph. 2:2a).
2. “The prince of the power of the air” --the devil (Eph. 2:2b).
3. “The lusts of the flesh” (Eph. 2:3).

B. Life generated from God's grace through faith (Ephesians 2:4-6).

“But God...” (Eph. 2:4): God’s marvelous grace is “rich in mercy,” God is holy. He hates sin but loves the sinner. He offers Jew and Gentile salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 6:8).

“By grace ye are saved” (Eph. 2:5): Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that they were NOT SAVED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, but by God’s grace shown in the gospel. The law demanded perfection. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10).

There are two sides to salvation -- the HUMAN and the DIVINE. Everything that God has done for us is an ACT OF HIS GRACE. Everything that we DO IS AN ACT OF FAITH IN HIM. GRACE THROUGH FAITH saved these Ephesians. They “heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13). They “BELIEVED” in Christ (Eph. 1:13). They repented of their sins (Acts 20:21). They “confessed” (Acts 19:18). “They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” Acts 19:5). This is HOW they

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were saved by grace through faith. They did not merit, or earn salvation. They accepted it as “The GIFT of God.... through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“And hath raised us up together...” (Eph. 2:6): “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him” (Col. 2:12). “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). Our resurrection is pictured in our baptism (Rom. 6:4). We are now seated representatively in Christ “in heavenly places,” as we actually shall some day REIGN WITH HIM. “If we suffer, we shall also REIGN WITH HIM” (II Tim. 2:12).

C. The glory ahead of us (Ephesians 2:7).

“That in the ages to come he might show...” (Eph. 2:7): God is some day going to demonstrate His glorious and gracious “kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.” Our FUTURE is SECURE with Him.

D. The place of “good works” in our lives (Ephesians 2:8-10).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith...” (Eph. 2:8): The gentiles were never under the law, as the Jews were. Note three contrasts:

1. Grace vs. Law.
2. Faith vs. Works.
3. Wages vs. Gift.

Man cannot earn his salvation. It is God’s gift to us through the gospel. We can BY FAITH accept this precious gift (Rom. 6:23). “Faith” has the DEFINITE ARTICLE before it in the Greek; it means THE GOSPEL.

“Not of works...” (Eph. 2:9): Since man cannot EARN his salvation, he has nothing of which to boast. It is God’s grace of which we boast!

“For we are his workmanship...” (Eph. 2:10): “Workmanship” is “poiema” from which we get our English word “poem.” We as Christians are God’s poems. God has quickened or raised us from spiritual death so we could abound in “good works.” God wants His children to “do good ... be rich in good works” (I Tim. 6:18). If you are LOAFING AROUND SPIRITUALLY, it is a sign you are “dead!”

II. Jesus Unites All Men in Himself (Ephesians 2:11-22)

A. Jew and Gentile contrasted (Ephesians 2:11-13).

“Wherefore, remember...” (Eph. 2:11): “Wherefore” applies to the Gentile Christians the arguments in Eph. 2:1-10. The apostle bids the Gentiles to “remember” what God had done in their behalf. This should stir us to SERVICE UNCEASING (Rom. 2:4).

“Uncircumcision”: A term referring to Gentiles.

“Circumcision”: A term that came to be used as a name for the Jews. God gave the Jews the sign of circumcision, a token of the covenant He made with them (Gen. 17:11; Rom. 9:4).

“That at that time ye were without Christ...” (Eph. 2:12) The past state of the Gentiles is described. They had no knowledge of Christ. In that “time past” Israel was God’s chosen people, God’s commonwealth, those to whom God gave the promises and the Old Testament Scriptures (Gen. 12:1f). Gentiles had “NO HOPE,” and were “WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD”! They were “ATHEISTS” in the original sense of BEING WITHOUT GOD, and hostile to God because the Gentile did not choose to worship God according to the LIGHT HE HAD. The Gentile BLEW OUT WHAT LIGHT he had, so “GOD GAVE THEM UP” to many awful things (Rom. 1:18-32).

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“But now...” (Eph. 2:13): The whole picture changes. Christ came and through the gospel has brought hope to all. “But now” in Christ they are “made nigh by the blood of Christ!

B. Jesus unites Jew and Gentile into one body (Ephesians 2:14-16).

“For he is our peace...”(Eph. 2:14): It is Christ crucified and RISEN who is “our peace.” He broke down and ended on the cross the law of 'closes which built a wall between Jew and Gentile (Col. 2:14). Christ banishes all racial and national distinctions “to make IN HIMSELF of twain ONE NEW MAN, 50 MAKING PEACE” (verse 15). If ALL MEN were really in Christ, WAR WOULD DISAPPEAR TODAY from the earth.

In the temple courts a partition wall divided the court of the Gentiles from the court of Israel with an inscription forbidding a Gentile from going further (Josephus, Ant.VIII. 3,2). Remember the uproar when Paul was accused of taking Trophimus beyond this wall (Acts 21:28)?

“Having abolished...” (Eph. 2:15): Christ’s death made the old law null and void.

“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross...” (Eph. 2:16): The cross makes peace between Jew and Gentile. The blood of the cross cleanses BOTH JEW AND GENTILE BEFORE GOD, and makes peace between them and God.

“Having slain the enmity thereby”: Not only of Jew for the Gentile, but of the sinner for God. When the sinner once fixes his mind on the bleeding Saviour, the “goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Rom. 2:4).

C. Peace and unity preached (Ephesians 2:17-18).

“And came and preached peace to you...” (Eph. 2:17); This is the wonderful Message of the Prince of Peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you...” (John 14:27). “He preached peace” to both Jew and Gentile, “to the far off ones” and “to the nigh ones.” By the Cross and after the Cross Christ could preach that message. Note:

1. Christ is our peace (Eph. 2:14).
2. Christ made peace (Eph. 2:15).
3. Christ preaches peace (Eph. 2:17).

“For through him we both have access...” (Eph. 2:18): God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit unite in welcoming the once heathen Gentile and the once proud but sinful Jew “unto the Father.” The Three Persons all share in the work of redemption. The Spirit of Adoption enables both Jew and Gentile to cry, “Abba, Father.” Both pray to ONE FATHER. Hence we are all brethren.

D. God is building one household (Ephesians 2:19-22).

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers...” (Eph. 2:19) Gentiles have been brought “nigh by the blood of Christ” (verse 13). No longer are Gentiles dwellers just outside the house or family of God! Gentiles are now in the family of God, “the household of God” (see Rom. 8:29), The idea of a house suggests a building.

“And are build upon the foundation of the apostles...” (Eph. 2:20): “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 3:11). The foundation was laid in Christ’s death on the cross. The apostles laid the “foundation,” followed by the ministry of the “prophets” in the early days of the Church when as yet we did not have the written New Testament Scriptures.

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“Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone”: Jesus had spoken of himself as the “stone,” rejected by the Jewish builders or “experts,” but chosen of God as the “head of the corner” (Matt. 21:42). “The ‘akro-goniaios’ here is the primary foundation stone at the angle of the structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of walls and cross-walls throughout” (W. W. Lloyd). Read Isaiah 28:16; Acts 4:11; I Peter 2:7.

“In whom all the building ... grows unto an holy temple of the Lord” (Eph. 2:21): In Christ Himself. The picture is that of a great structure with one harmonious design. Here the design is that of a “holy temple!” Its beauty and holiness are due to the fact that every part has a vital relation to Christ. The Gentile Christians to whom the epistle is addressed are thus assured that they have a place in this building. They once were with “hope and without God in the world.” Now they are united with Christ. Therefore they, too, as well as Jewish believers, “are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (verse 22). God dwells in this temple. (I Cor. 3:16). Every Christian is a **STONE BUILT INTO IT!** God’s temple is composed of “living stones” (I Pet. 2:5), has a holy priesthood, and spiritual sacrifices.

“Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But O, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King!

“Some day, when fades the golden sun
Beneath the rosy-tinted west,
My blessed Lord will say, “Well done!”
And I shall enter into rest.

“And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story - - Saved BY GRACE
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story -- SAVED BY GRACE.”

---Fanny J. Crosby

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QUESTIONS

1. Can you name the Seven Steps UPWARD from the Cross to the Throne of God (Eph. 1:20-23)?
2. How is it possible for one to be “dead” and very much alive physically at the same time (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:6)?
3. What is true of some people who think they are enjoying life (I Tim. 5:6)? What was told to one who had high moral standards, but was insensible to the Spirit of God (John 3:3-5)?
4. What three things are true of every sinner (Eph. 2:1-3)?
5. Since Satan is the spiritual father of some people, whose will are they prone to obey (John 8:44)?
6. What is the meaning of “by nature the children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3; John 3:36; I John 2:15-17)?
7. What is God’s attitude toward sinners (Eph. 2:4, 5; John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Gal. 2:20; I John 4:10; Rev. 1:5)?
8. How are we saved “BY GRACE” (Eph. 2:5; 1:13; Acts 20:21; 19:18, 5; Rom. 6:23)?
9. What is God’s purpose for the church (Eph. 2:7; 3:10; I Cor. 2:9-12)?
10. By what, through what, and from whom does “salvation” come (Eph. 2:8)?
11. What three great contrasts do we find in Eph. 2:8-9?
12. What does “by grace” prevent (Eph. 2:9; Rom. 3:27; I Cor. 1:26-31; compare I Chron. 29:14-16)?
13. Whose “workmanship” are we (Eph. 2:10; I Tim. 6:18)?
14. What five things are true of all who are unsaved (Eph. 2:12; Rom. 2:28, 29; Rom. 1:18-32)?
15. “But now”, what new and living way has been opened for all who will receive Him (Eph. 2:13)?
16. Who is “our peace” (Eph. 2:14; Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:1), and what was broken down as a result of Christ’s redemptive work (Eph. 2:14; Acts 21:28)?
17. What “abolished” (literally “rendered idle”) the laws and ordinances that separated Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:15; Col. 1:21, 22, 14)?
18. What was Christ’s three-fold relationship to this “peace” (Eph. 2:14, 15, 17)?
19. How does Paul refer to the church in this chapter (Eph. 2:15, 16, 19, 21, 22)? In what “kingdom” do Jew and Gentile now hold citizenship (Eph. 2:19; Col. 1:13; I Pet. 2:9)?
20. What needs to be thoroughly understood about the “foundation” (Eph. 2:20; I Cor. 3:11; I Pet. 2:4, 5)?
What is the purpose of the cementing together of true believers by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:22)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 21
Ephesians 3

Page 1
Memory Verse: Ephesians 3:20-21

Memory Verse:

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or thin⁴, according to the power than worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus through-out all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21).

A WONDERFUL BUILDING

The Church is Ephesians is set forth under three wonderful metaphors:

The Body (Eph. 1:22, 23).

The Building (Eph. 2:20-22).

The Bride (Eph. 5:23-27).

These metaphors, in a certain measure, present three phases of Christian truth and life. Thus:

1. The Body, building up each other in the truth, growing in grace and spirituality – our assembly life (Eph. 4:16).
2. The Building, suggesting our service, seeking to win souls for Christ – our public life.
3. The Bride, the enjoyment of His love in personal intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus– our private life.

Ephesians 3 presents God’s plan of the ages which issues in universal glory through the church.

I. The Preacher of Grace (Ephesians 3:1-13)

A. Approach to prayer for the church (Ephesians 3:1).

“For this cause..” (Eph. 3:1): Paul has emphasized the grace of God to Gentile believers in that they **SHARE WITH BELIEVING Jews THE SALVATION** wrought out by Christ. He has shown that the Gentiles and Jews are being **BUILT TOGETHER** into a **SPIRITUAL TEMPLE** for the indwelling of God. With this in mind he is about to pray for the Ephesian Christians. To make the prayer more impressive he begins by a reference to the fact that he is the chosen apostle to the Gentiles.

“I Paul...” The verb of which “I Paul” is the subject is given in verse 14. The prayer Paul started to offer for the Ephesians in verse 1 is actually given in verses 14-21. He explains to them in a rich paragraph (verses 1-13) God’s use of him “for **YOU GENTILES**” (verse 1).

“The prisoner of Jesus Christ”: When Paul announced on the temple stairs in Jerusalem that God had chosen him to preach to the Gentiles, his Jewish hearers hated him. That undying hatred on their part continued until the day of Paul’s death (Acts 22:21-24; 28:17, 20; II Tim. 4:6-8). In carrying out this mission to the Gentiles Paul suffered greatly (II Cor. 11:23-33). He was a prisoner at Rome when this epistle was written.

B. Explanation of “the mystery of Christ” as preparation for the prayer (Ephesians 3:2-13).

1. Paul’s stewardship of the universal gospel (Eph. 3:2).

“If ye have heard of the dispensation... given me” (Eph. 3:2): “IF” reminds the Ephesians that they **HAD HEARD** of the **OFFICE** God had given him (Acts 26:17, 18).

“Dispensation”: This means office or the stewardship given Paul in reference to the Gentiles. “Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21). The apostle was divinely chosen for this task

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(Eph. 1:9; 3:9). "I am made a minister," affirmed Paul, "according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for YOU (Gentiles), to fulfill the word of God" (Col. 1:25).

2. Paul's understanding is "the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:3-4).

"How that by revelation he made known unto me..." (Eph. 3:3): "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" (Gal. 1:11, 12). This divine revelation was Paul's qualification for preaching.

"The mystery": "Mystery" is not something which cannot be known, or something difficult to understand, BUT SOMETHING ONCE HIDDEN AND NOW REVEALED, something God graciously gave him. "I wrote afore" refers to Eph. 1:9-13; 2:11-13. What he wrote before and in this chapter would enable them to SEE or "understand" this "mystery" as plainly as he does (verse 4).

"When ye read" (Eph. 3:4): This Epistle will be read in public.

3. The long unrecognized "mystery" now God's open secret (Eph. 3:5).

"Which in other ages..." (Eph. 3:5): "Which" refers to the "mystery." "In other generations" it was not revealed or given to man. NOW the Holy Spirit has given this "mystery" to the "holy apostles and prophets", not the old Hebrew "prophets," but the "prophet" in the church (Eph. 4:11). No doubt some of the Hebrew prophets did have some glimpse of the salvation of the Gentiles, but they did not understand their language as well as we do in the light of the gospel! Today "whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17) may see this "mystery,"

4. Terms of the "mystery" (Eph. 3:6).

"That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs..." (Eph. 3:6): This is the "mystery" LONG HIDDEN BUT NOW REVEALED. Guided and illumined by the Spirit the Ephesians understood "that the Gentiles are FELLOW-HEIRS, and FELLOW-MEMBERS of the body, and FELLOW-PARTAKERS of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (Compare Acts 10:34; 11:18; 13:46-48).

"The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:16, 17).

5. Paul's function in relation to the "mystery" (Ephesians 3:7-9).

"Whereof I was made a minister..." (Eph. 3:7): Christ called Paul to minister this "wonderful grace of Jesus" among Gentiles. Read Acts 2:33, 37-39; Gal. 3:14. Paul, as a minister, MADE KNOWN THIS MYSTERY TO THE GENTILES. The Lord told Ananias who did not want to "GO" and tell Saul the gospel terms of obedience: "GO THY WAY: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, TO BEAR MY NAME BEFORE THE GENTILES..." (Acts 9:15, 16).

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints..." (Eph. 3:8): The apostle did not think himself worthy of such a great trust. 'I hat he had been a PERSECUTOR before he became a PREACHER of the Christ always humbled Paul (I Cor. 15:9; Phil. 3:6). The closer you come to a mountain peak, the more insignificant you become in comparison. The closer we draw to Christ the more humble it makes us. Read I Tim. 1:12-16.

"This grace..." James, Peter and John "who seemed to be pillars" in the Jerusalem church "saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision (Gentiles) was committed" to Paul (Gal. 2:7, 8).

"And to make all men see..." (Eph. 3:9): Jews as well as Gentiles.

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“Fellowship of the mystery”: The office or stewardship of this mystery. It was demonstrated in Paul’s apostleship to the Gentiles. With the eyes of the heart “being enlightened” (Eph. 1:18) one can then turn the light for others to see (see Col. 1:26).

“Hath been hid in God...” God from the beginning purposed to save the Gentiles by the gospel, but kept it hidden. That is, God did not their reveal the “unsearchable” or “inexhaustible” riches of His purpose.

6. The church, the instrument of God's plan of the ages and the revealer of God's wisdom to the universe (Ephesians 3:10-11).

“To the intent that now...” (Eph. 3:10): It is God’s purpose to have the “mystery”, so long hidden but NOW REVEALED, preached to show the much-variegated or many-colored wisdom of God to the world. This was “made known”

1. To the Gentiles by preaching the gospel.
2. To Jews. This is implied by the “all” of Eph. 3:9.
3. To “principalities and powers in heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10).

“By the church”: The Church is the Body of Christ and has been left in the world to make the unseen, indwelling Christ known to men so that they “all” might be drawn to Him (II Pet. 3:9). This is the MISSION of the CHURCH. Let the Church be the Church! This is the “eternal purpose” (verse 11) of God. “Through the ages one eternal purpose runs” (Eph. 1:11).

7. Paul's personal response to the plan of God in the universal gospel (Ephesians 3:12, 13).

“In whom we have boldness...” (Eph. 3:12): Jew and Gentile alike may come boldly THROUGH CHRIST TO GOD. To show this “mystery” to the Gentiles Paul suffered much for Christ. He was now in prison. Yet he did not want the Ephesians to become discouraged, or give in to evil because of his tribulations for them. His work was not ended. Such suffering indicated he had a GREAT CAUSE TO PRESENT TO THE WORLD (verse 13). That Jew and Gentile form together the Body of Christ, and to be WITH CHRIST UNITED forever in the closest possible bonds, presents the highest celestial glory. In Ephesians 3:6-13 we have reached the very highest pinnacle of bliss and glory. It is no wonder that the apostle now “bows his knees” to pray for them.

II. The Prayer for Spiritual Power (Ephesians 3:14-19)

A. The character of God as addressed the original archetypal Father (Ephesians 3:14-15),

“For this cause I bow my knees...” (Eph. 3:14): This is Paul’s second prayer. His first prayer (Eph. 1:15-21). Paul now resumes in verse 14 the thought of verse 1. Calvin supposes that Paul KNELT as he dictated this prayer, but this is not necessary. In the Garden Jesus “kneeled down, and prayed” (Luke 22:41; see also Acts 7:40; 20:36; 21:5), though STANDING is also frequent (see Mark 11:25; Luke 18:11, 13).

“Unto the Father...” The Fountain or source of all good. “For through Him (Christ) we (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:18).

“Of whom the whole family...” (Eph. 3:15): The Father is referred to. “Whole family” is “every family” in the Revision. “The idea is that the Father is the Father of all the families of his children, whether Jews or Gentiles on earth, or in heaven. He is 'Our Father in heaven' to the believer of every race, in this world of the world to come. All, as far as creation is concerned, derive their being from Him, like children from a parent, and all the good are His spiritual children.”

B. Gracious petitions (Ephesians 3:16-19).

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1. That the church may be strengthened to be indwelt by the Christ (Eph. 3:16-17).

“That he would grant you...” (Eph. 3:16): Paul now states the things for which he so earnestly prays in behalf of those to whom he writes. 'I here are really five petitions in this greatest of all Paul's prayers. Nowhere does Paul sound such depths of spiritual emotion or rise to such heights of spiritual passion as here. The whole seems to be colored with “the riches of His glory,” a prayer for ENDOWMENT.

“Strengthened with might”: The Greek word for “might” is DUNAMIS, power to achieve. The source of this strength is the Holy Spirit, who is to communicate the desired power. The words for “inner man” may be rendered “deep in you.”

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...” (Eph. 3:17a): The word for “dwell” means “make His home with” – permanent dweller. This is the second petition – for ENTHRONEMENT. Christ is asked to make His home in our hearts. This is the ideal, but a deal of fixing has to be done in our hearts for Christ. Spiritual housecleaning is in order every day!

“That ye, being rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17b): The third petition relates to the love of Christ – for ESTABLISHMENT. Paul used this mixed metaphor in their applied sense of BEING SECURELY SETTLED AND DEEPLY FOUNDED. Love is the element in which Christians are to be thoroughly grounded. “Love” does not mean love for Christ or the love of Christ, but love in general, the Christian grace of “love.” This grace results from the indwelling Spirit and is indeed the FRUIT of (the SPIRIT (Gal, 5:22).

2. That the saints may all together grasp the incomprehensible love of the Christ (Eph. 3:18-19).

“That ye may be able to comprehend...” (Eph. 3:18): This is petition for ENLIGHTENMENT. We will never be able to take it ALL IN, but you comprehend a little and another a little. ALL OF US TOGETHER begin to get SOME IDEA OF GOD'S WONDERFUL PURPOSE OF GRACE. We need one another in fellowship to help each other's faith. This is the climax of the prayer of Paul for them. Without love they can never understand Christ's great love for them.

“Comprehend... breadth, and length, and depth, and height”: Here Paul gives a rectangular or FOUR DIMENSION MEASURE OF LOVE. The cross sums up God's purpose of grace. Such love is real. We can really know it and grasp a part of it and may grow from more to more of it.

It has been suggested that the “BREADTH” of such love includes Jew and Gentile; its “LENGTH” is from eternity; its “HEIGHT” is measured by the heavenly places to which it brings us; its “DEPTH,” by the death Christ endured for our redemption. Instead of offering specific measurements of “love divine, all love excelling,” Paul meant to indicate a love that is BEYOND ALL DESCRIPTION AND ESTIMATE. It “passeth knowledge.”

“And to know the love of Christ...” (Eph. 3:19a) This is real ENLARGEMENT. Paul wants them to be FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. This is ENRICHMENT! Of One alone can that be said: “In Him dwelleth ALL the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). “Behold, the heaven and heaven of

heavens cannot contain THEE” (I Kings 8:27), YET GOD DWELLS IN US AND WE IN HIM (Acts 17:20). As one has said, “You cannot fill a cup WITH THE OCEAN, but you can FILL IT IN the ocean.”

As we feast upon God's love and wisdom, He will enlarge our capacity, so that we can take in and enjoy more and more of all He has been pleased to make ours in Christ!

III. The Precious Doxology (Ephesians 3:20-21)

“Now unto him...” (Eph. 3:20): Paul has offered a prayer, and closes it with a doxology. Paul is fully aware of the GREATNESS OF THE BLESSINGS ASKED FOR, but the doxology ascribes to God the POWER TO DO THEM FOR US. There is no limit to His power. God is able to do superabundantly beyond the utmost we can ask or think of asking! This ability is “according to the power that worketh in us.”

This doxology is full of a sublimity that is characterized by simplicity. “Unto him be the glory,” that is, the GREAT PURPOSE; “in the church and in Christ Jesus,” such the WONDROUS MEDIUM; “unto all the generations of the age of ages,” that the IMMEASURABLE DURATION.

“Amen”: “So let it be.” The apostle uses a word of solemn affirmation, familiar to Old Testament readers, and used from the first in the Christian Church.

QUESTIONS

1. Under what three metaphors is the church set forth in Ephesians (Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:20-22; 5:23-27)?
2. With what three words does our lesson begin today (Eph. 3:1)?
3. What is the great construction project of which Paul is thinking as he carries on the argument in Ephesians 3 (Eph. 2:20-22)?
4. To what special mission was Paul appointed in connection with the materials of the great spiritual temple (Eph. 3:8, 9)?
5. How did the apostle describe this special commission (Acts 22:21; Eph. 1:9; Gal. 1:11, 12)? How did the Jews react to Paul’s preaching salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 22:22)?
6. What was “made known” unto Paul (Eph. 3:3)? How long had this secret of one spiritual body of both Jewish and Gentile believers been held back (Rom. 16:25)?
7. Who also shared in the knowledge of this “mystery” (Eph. 3:5)? Was this “mystery” made known in Old Testament times (Col. 1:25)? To whom was this “mystery” now made manifest (Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:6)?
8. When did Christ assume HEADSHIP of His BODY, the Church (Eph. 1:20-23)?
9. Who was first prepared for the great truth that the Body of Christ was to be comprised of SOME FROM ALL NATIONS (Acts 15:7-11)?
10. Upon whom was the Church built (Eph. 2:20)?
11. What removed the “partition” between Jew and Gentile and put all upon the same basis (Eph. 2:13-14)?
12. What was the marvel to Paul that he should be called to “PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES”? (Eph. 3:8)? What else did Paul call himself (I Tim. 1:15)?
13. What was God’s purpose in the “mystery” (Eph. 3:10)? What is God’s “eternal purpose” (Eph. 3:11; II Pet. 3:9; Eph. 1:11)?
14. Where is the “family” of God now located (Eph. 3:15)? What request did make of the church at Ephesus (Eph. 3:13)?
15. Because of God’s unlimited resources, for what does Paul pray for the Ephesians (Eph. 3:16-19)?
16. What two things did Paul desire in regard to the Christian’s love (Eph. 3:17; Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22)?
17. What suggested meaning has been given to the four dimension MEASURE OF LOVE (Eph. 3:18)?
18. Can we have an “experiential knowledge” of the “love of Christ,” even though that love itself “passeth knowledge” (Eph. 3:19)?
19. In whom alone “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9; I Kings 8:27; Acts 17:20)?
20. With what does Paul close his prayer (Eph. 3:20-21)? What is the great purpose, medium and duration of the truth expressed in this sublime, yet simple “doxology”?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 22

Page 1

Ephesians 4

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:32

Memory Verse:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

A WONDERFUL WALK

The Epistle to the Ephesians is divided into TWO MAIN PORTIONS. The first three chapters present the DOCTRINAL portion of the letter; the last three chapters contain the PRACTICAL LIFE and CONDUCT of the believer that should flow from the truth presented.

A prince does not live like a prince in order to BECOME A PRINCE, but because he is one! Even so a believer walks like a Christian BECAUSE HE IS A CHRISTIAN.

How to Walk

A. Christian should

1. Walk in Obedience (Ephesians 2:1-2).
2. Walk in “Good Works” (Ephesians 2:10).
3. Walk Worthy of the Vocation” (Ephesians 4:1).
4. “Walk in Love” (Ephesians 5:2).
5. “Walk As Children of Light” (Ephesians 5:8).
6. “Walk Circumspectly” (Ephesians 5:15).

On the BASIS of WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR US, and WOULD DO IN AND THROUGH US, the apostle to the Gentile gives

I. Exhortations to Christian Unity (Ephesians 4:1-16)

A. The “CALLED” are called upon to prove worthy of their calling (Ephesians 4:1).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord...” (Eph. 4:1): Paul opens the practical portion of the epistle with “I therefore.” Whenever we find “therefore” in the Bible, we must ask ourselves WHY IT IS THERE. It refers to what has been written before. In view of the grace revealed in Christ, in view of the new life imparted, in view of the UNION of Gentiles and Jews in the Church of Christ, “therefore.”

“The prisoner of the Lord”: This is not so much to arouse pity as to express his conscious dignity and his conception of the importance of the doctrines he has taught, and the instruction he is about to give. His imprisonment is in a great cause. It is being endured for the sake of Christ, and by “an ambassador in chains” (Eph. 6:20).

“I... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation...” Paul beseeches the Ephesians to “walk worthily of the vocation” you have received. “Walk” is often used in the Bible for the life of the Christian. It is an appropriate symbol. Life, as we know, is not usually spent in running or flying, but more often in walking. It suggests the steady, patient, daily living for Christ, and walking with God. The Christian life is one step at a time. And to enable us “to walk worthy” of His glory, the Word of God is “a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

What a CALL we Christians have (Eph. 3:6). Christ is OUR HEAD (Eph. 1:22, 23). We are His Building (Eph. 2:19-22). Let us “WALK WORTHY” of it.

B. The spirit required for a worthy response (Ephesians 4:2-6).

1. A full humble committal of self in relation to other members of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:2).

“With all lowliness and meekness...” (Eph. 4:2): “Walk” in “unalloyed humility and gentleness.” Jesus was “meek” (Matt. 11:29; I Pet. 2:23). Meekness is humility tested in the crucible of trial, reproach, and persecution. Meekness is not weakness; it is moral might.

“With longsuffering”: The quality that encourages the keeping of the unity of the Spirit in relation to our fellow-believers. “Love suffereth long” (I Cor, 13:4).

“Forbearing one another in love”: This virtue is the direct result of “longsuffering,” which intimates a tolerance free from the spirit of revenge. “In love” forbearance is to have its MOTIVE and life. It is “love” that “covers up everything, has unquenchable faith, hopes under all circumstances, endures without limit. Love never fades out” (I Cor. 13:7, 8).

Unceasing zeal for perfect unity of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:3-6).

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit...” (Eph. 4:3): The Body of Christ included Jews, Gentiles, rich and poor, men and women of all races and classes. Only by unceasing zeal could unity and peace prevail in the church. The “unity” is that which the Spirit produces. We are NOT TOLD TO TRY AND MAKE UNITY, or FORM A UNION! It is EXISTING UNITY that we are to “KEEP”! The Ephesian Christians are urged to KEEP.

“The unity of the Spirit”: The unity of those who have the SAME SPIRIT, not merely an outward unity. For what kind of “unity” did our Lord pray? “Neither PRAY I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they ALL MAY BE ONE as THOU, Father, ART IN ME, and I IN THEE, that THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.... that they may be ONE, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, that they MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, at thou hast loved me” (John 17:21, 23).

This is no mere outward religious uniformity such as some men seek to bring about. The “unity of the Spirit” cannot be based on COMBINATIONS AND COMPROMISES. The Holy Spirit brings yielded believers into a SPIRIT OF FELLOWSHIP REGARDLESS OF MINOR DIFFERENCES. They are made to feel the throbbing of the same divine life. They love the same Lord because they are born of the same Spirit!

“In the bond of peace”: An outward unity that does not secure “peace”, cannot be the “unity of the Spirit”.

Seven Great Features of This Unity (Ephesians 4:4-6)

1. “There is one body...” (Eph. 4:4): The Spirit of God has seen fit to employ the imagery of a human BODY and its relation to the directing HEAD as a graphic illustration of Christ and the Church (Eph. 2:22, 23). Modern denominations were unknown in the New Testament days.

2. “And one Spirit...” God bestowed the same Spirit upon Jew and Gentile, upon all “saints” (Acts 2:38; I Cor, 12:13). The Holy Spirit furnishes the energizing and unifying power so that the Body can operate for God’s glory.

3. “Even as ye are called in ONE HOPE...” This is “THE HOPE which is laid up for you IN HEAVEN” (Col. 1:5). The glorious END in view for the Church is to “BE CAUGHT UP together with them in the clouds, to MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thess, 4:17)!

4. “One Lord...” (Eph. 4:5): Christ, the Head of His Church, is the OBJECT of faith. If we are members of His Body of which He is the Head, then it is plain that we owe absolute submission and obedience to Him Matt. 28:18-20; John 14:15; Rom. 10:9; Luke 6:46)!

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5. “One faith...” One Lord who is the object of faith (John 20:30, 31). We lay hold upon Him by Faith (Rom. 10:17). “For we WALK by FAITH, not by sight” (II Cor, 5:7) day by day. And we will “KEEP THE FAITH” (II Tim. 4:7) of Christ crucified, risen, ascended, and COMING AGAIN (John 14:1-6,17).

6. “One baptism...” This baptism “in my sober judgment... MUST BE BAPTISM BY WATER” (August Van Ryn). There are not three different ways of administering baptism. “For thirteen hundred years was baptism an immersion of the person under water” (Brenner, Catholic).

7. “One God and Father of all...” (Eph. 4:6): The SEVENTH UNITY is mentioned as the CROWN and CAPSTONE of all, as it were. “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” There is not a separate God for each nation or religion. There is ONE GOD FOR ALL MEN! He is God of all in CREATION; He would be the FATHER of all in REDEMPTION.

C. Individual responsibility of each within the body (Ephesians 4:7)

“But not every one of us is given grace...” (Eph. 4:7): Every believer has a gift. “There are DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS, but the same Spirit” (I Cor. 12:4). “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (I Peter 4:10).

One gift may not be as SHOWY, or as GREAT, yet oftentimes it is just as important. Years ago, a lady gave an organ recital, and had a young fellow pumping the bellows for her. After one piece had been played and the applause had died down, the young fellow said to the artiste: “WE PLAYED beautifully, didn't we?”

“We?” said she, “YOU mean I, don't you?”

He did not answer her, but when it became time for the next selection, and she placed her hands on the keys, there wasn't a sound. “WHY don't you pump?” she asked.

“Well,” was the reply, “WHO PLAYED THAT piece just now – YOU or WE?”

“All right; WE played it.”

“Fine; then I'll pump again,” said the perceptive young chap. Her job was more artistic and skillful than his, but not one whit more necessary. It is even so in the spiritual life of the Church. Every one of us has his corner to fill, and if he fills' it earnestly, seeking to glorify the Lord, He will give higher service, for to him that hath shall more be given (Luke 12:47, 48).

D. Gifts of the victorious Christ for the building and perfecting of the saints (Ephesians 4:8-13).

“Wherefore he saith...” (Eph. 4:8): A citation from Psalm 68:18, 19. It is cited to show that Christ gives.

“When he ascended up on high...”: Christ ascended to the Father's throne (Acts 1:9-11; Heb. 12:2). The ascended Christ received gifts, and bestowed them “for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ” (verse 12).

“Descended first into the lower parts of the earth...” (Eph. 4:9): This refers to the incarnation, to His birth, death and burial. When Christ “rose AGAIN the third day according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:4), “he led captivity captive”. He CONQUERED SIN, the curse of the law, and DEATH (Heb. 2:9, 10, 14, 15).

As a conqueror, returning in triumph, was wont to distribute gifts, so Christ signalized his ascension by gifts, as “he ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things” (verse 10).

“And he gave some, apostles...” (Eph. 4:11): The “gifts” (verse 8) of Christ were various offices. They were given to promote the “unity of the faith” (verse 13). “Apostles” were all chosen by Christ (Luke 6:12, 13), and had to be witnesses of his resurrection (Acts 1:22). They could have NO SUCCESSORS; their office continues.

“And some, prophets”: They were travelling teachers who, under divine inspiration, instructed the Church in Christian doctrine and even on occasion predicted future events (Eph. 2:20). The four daughters of Philip the evangelist are said to have “prophesied” (Acts 21:8-9).

“And some, evangelists...” Such as Philip (Acts 8:4-12; 21:8). This once is to preach the gospel, and will be necessary as long as the church continues on earth. As this office did not require extraordinary gifts, it is permanent.

“And some, pastors and teachers...” It would seem that the words did not describe two classes of workers but two functions of one office. These pastor-teachers had the oversight of local churches and were engaged in giving spiritual guidance and instruction. “Let the elders that RULE WELL be counted worthy of DOUBLE HONOUR, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine” (I Tim. 5:17). A “pastor” should always be an “elder,” but it is not certain that a “teacher” was always an “elder.”

“For the perfecting of the saints...” (Eph. 4:13): This is the end or purpose of Christ’s gifts to His church: to help the saints to HIGHER and HOLIER LIVES, that all phases of the ministry build up “the body of Christ.” All the saints in the church must be ONE “until we all may arrive at the unity of faith and that understanding of the Son of God that brings completeness of personality, tending toward the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (verse 13). Thus the Body of Christ will grow up into vigorous, spiritual manhood!

E. Full cooperation of the entire glorious goal – the complete body of the FULL-GROWN Christian (Ephesians 4:15-16).

“That we henceforth be no more children...” (Eph. 4:14): It is not God’s intention that His people should be at the mercy of every wind of doctrine, or like children, tossed to and fro, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive. Paul warned the Ephesian elders against false teachers (Acts 20:30). Do not be content to be a “BABES IN CHRIST” (I Cor. 3:1), and never cut your eye-teeth (Heb. 5:11-14)!

“But speaking the truth in love...” (Eph. 4:15): “Lovingly attached to truth, we should GROW UP in every way toward Him who is the Head – Christ.” No amount of loyalty to the truth is a sign of spiritual maturity unless it is accompanied by sympathy and “in love.”

“From whom the whole BODY fitly joined together...” (Eph. 4:16): Dr. Joseph Parker used to say: “Truth sits not on a throne bristling with bayonets, but on one established on the immovable basis of righteousness and infinite love.” The formation of the Church is represented by an architectural metaphor in Ephesians 2:21, but in 4:16 the apostle borrows a physiological metaphor, illustrating the GROWTH OF THE HUMAN BODY. EACH MEMBER MUST DO HIS PART to BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST, the CHURCH!

II. Emphasis on Christian Morality (Ephesians 4:17-32)

A. The old life and the new (Ephesians 4:17-24).

“This I say therefore... walk not as other Gentiles walk” (Eph. 4:17): After the great principles named in verses 3-16 Paul returns to the exhortations of verses 1-3. The Christian is not to walk as unsaved Gentiles in “emptiness” of mind, and darkness since they did not have the gospel light (verse 18), without spiritual life and willfully blind, and who greedily wanted more and more of evil (verse 19).

“Who have... given themselves over unto lasciviousness...” (Eph, 4:19): Unbridled lust as in II Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19. “To work all uncleanness” is perhaps prostitution, “for a trading (or work) in all unclean-

ness.” Certainly Corinth and Ephesus could qualify for this charge. “With greediness” is from ‘pleonektes,’ one who always wants more whether money or sexual indulgence as here. The two vices are often connected in the New Testament.

“But ye have not so learned Christ...” (Eph. 4:20): Such a “walk” (verses 17:19) was not worthy of the follower of Christ. It is contrary to Christ. In the historical Christ, in Jesus of Nazareth, are embodied the true standards of living, the motives, the purity, the holiness, which his followers are expected to accept, to assume, and to reproduce (verse 21).

“That ye put off...” (Eph. 4:22): The “old man” is the former unregenerate self given to sin, in contrast with “the new man,” or new life in Christ. The “new man” is the one “born again... born of water and of the Spirit” (John 3:3,5). He is a “new creature” (II Cor. 5:17), a CHRISTIAN. In repentance he PUTS AWAY EVIL. He is made “NEW,” by having a new mind 'of spirit (verse 23; see Rom. 12:2).

“An that ye put on the new man...” (Eph. 4:24): “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14). “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). This is the “brand-new man” (Eph. 2:15), after the pattern God, the new birth, the new life in Christ, destined to be like God in the end (Rom. 8:29). God now desires us to exhibit that perfect handiwork of His, as we live a life in “righteous-ness and true holiness.”

B. Heathen vices and Christian virtues (Ephesians 4:25-32).

“Wherefore putting away lying...” (Eph. 4:25): In verses 25 to 32 we have a few examples of this “PUTTING OFF” and “PUTTING ON.” Note the contrasts. Away with lying; now speak truth “each person to his neighbor, for we are one another's members,” This echoes Zech. 8:16.

“Be ye angry, and sin not...” (Eph. 4:26): This seems to be a quotation from Psalm 5:4, Septuagint version. When did Jesus manifest anger (Mark 3:5). Bishop Moule says: “Anger as a mere expression of wounded personality is sinful, for it means that SELF IS IN COMMAND. As a pure expression of repugnance to wrong, in loyalty to God, it is SINLESS where there is true occasion for it,”

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath”: Resentment is not to be cherished. Wrath is not to be nursed. Even righteous anger is to be controlled.

It is not to be prolonged beyond the sunset. “Neither give place to the devil” (verse 27), for if anger is permitted to continue it will give the “devil,” the Adversary, room to act, an opportunity of leading us into outbursts of passion, since angry feelings so easily result in hatred and malice and sinful words and deeds.

“Let him that stole steal no more...” (Eph. 4:28): Literally, “Let him who is stealing steal no more.” Does the language imply that the old pagan vice was still practice by some connected with the Christian Church? Stop stealing. “Let him labor.” WORK! Honest labor is the best antidote to the dishonest life. Every man is to labor in order that he may supply his own needs, and “have something to give the person in need.”

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth...” (Eph. 4:29): Shun what is “rotten,” anything that will demoralize others. Obscene, licentious, or immoral language is forbidden. The Greek word really means “rotten talk.” It is the same word that is used of decayed fish in Matt. 13:48! Speak what builds up “so as to add a blessing to the listeners.”

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God...” (Eph. 4:30): Such sins as those described above “grieve” the Holy Spirit. Neither will He continue to dwell in those addicted to such sins. Who of us has not sometimes grieved the Holy Spirit?

“Sealed unto the day of redemption”: The “sealing” of the Holy Spirit is an earnest, a proof, an assurance of the final redemption (Eph. 1:13). If we “grieve” Him away, the “seal” will be gone! A seal is a

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mark of ownership and security. It may be a stamp of likeness. We Christians belong to God. We are to be “TRANSFORMED” into His image (Rom. 12:1-2).

“Let all bitterness... be put away from you” (Eph. 4:31): This searching chapter closes with a salutary exhortation. “Get rid among you of every sort of bitterness, bad temper, anger, noisiness, abusive language and everything base.” “Bitterness” described the resentful, harsh temper. “Wrath” denotes fury, or the temporary outburst of passion, and “anger” the settled disposition of indignation and anger. Both have their root in the bitter and resentful spirit mentioned previously. “Clamor” and “evil speaking” are the audible expressions of the tempers just described. “Clamor” is the loud outburst of an angry man; “evil speaking” or “railing” is his slanderous, insulting, and abusive speech. All these feelings and expressions are to be “PUT AWAY,” together “with all malice,” or every kind of ill will and spite. These are all negatives.

“And be ye kind one to another...” (Eph. 4:32): By way of contrast Paul urges the supreme motive of love. These are all positive. Kindness is gentleness toward evildoers. To be “tenderhearted” is to feel toward them warm sympathy and love. Both these sentiments find their specific expression in “forgiving one another.” Forgiveness finds its model and impelling motive in the forgiveness of God.

QUESTIONS

1. How should a Christian “walk” (Eph. 2:1-2, 10; 4:1; 5:2, 8, 15)?
2. If the “key note” of the doctrinal portion of the epistle is “the hope of His calling” (Eph. 1:18), what is the “key thought” of the practical section of the epistle (Eph. 4:1)?
3. What does it mean to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1)?
4. Why is the exhortation necessary (Eph. 4:2) in view of the Christian’s exalted place (Eph. 2 and 3; Prov. 16:18; Rom. 5:5; I Cor. 13:7, 8)?
5. Who is the author of the “unity” we must “be diligent” to “keep” (Eph. 4:3; I Cor. 12:13)?
6. For what kind of unity did our Lord pray (John 17:21, 23)?
7. Can you clearly define the doctrinal basis for this “unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:4-6)?
8. Who determines the “gifts” which each Christian has (Eph. 4:7, 8; I Cor. 12:4; I Pet. 4:10)?
9. Can you name five “gifts” which “ascended” Christ gave the church (Eph. 4:11)?
10. For what purpose are these five “gifts” given (Eph. 4:12)?
11. What is the objective of these “gifts” (Eph. 4:13)? Have you cut your spiritual eyeteeth (I Cor. 3:1; Heb. 5:11-14)?
12. When will the church come to the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13; 5:27)?
13. What kind of men and women are responsible for cults that entice people away from the true teachings of the Bible (Eph. 4:14)?
14. How is the truth to be spoke (Eph. 4:15)?
15. Against what were these Christians warned (Eph. 4:17-19)? What does God sometimes do when people “give themselves over” to “lascivious-ness,” or unbridled lust (Rom. 1:24)?
16. What does Paul mean by the terms “old man” and “new men” (Eph. 4:22-24; Rom. 6:6; 12:2 8:29; Gal. 3:27)?
17. Against what six prevalent sins were the Christian warned (Eph. 4: 25-30)?
18. Did Jesus ever manifest “anger” (Mark 3:5)? Even “righteous indignation” should not be nursed beyond what time of the day (Eph. 4:26)?
19. Does the “rotten talk” of your class or clique “grieve the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 4:29, 30)?
20. How “kind” and “forgiving” should Christians be (Eph. 4:32)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 23

Page 1

Ephesians 5

Memory Verse: Ephesians 5:24

Memory Verse:

“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Ephesians 5:24).

A WONDERFUL BRIDE

“The Walk of the believer as a NEW MAN in Christ Jesus” began in Ephesians 4:17 and continues through Ephesians 5:2. Ephesus abounded with evil of the vilest kind. It was important that the early Christians be warned of the danger of following in the ways of those still in their sins. **THE UNSAVED ARE NOT A SAFE MEASURE OF OUR CONDUCT AS CHRISTIANS!**

Lead the unsaved to obey the gospel and “put on Christ” in Christian baptism (Gal. 3:27). If you can’t lead them to obey Christ, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matt. 7:6). The **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** of the Christian to Christ is an **INTIMATE ONE**. The Church is compared to the **BRIDE OF CHRIST** in this chapter.

I. We Must Be Clean Christians (Ephesians 5:1-7)

A. A call to holy living (Ephesians 5:1,2).

“Be ye therefore followers of God...” (Eph. 5:1): This is a startling exhortation. The Greek word for “followers” means “mimics.” “If we are to be like God, we must **IMITATE HIM!**” “Therefore” is because of what he has told them of God in Ephesians 4:32: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” The thought introduced in Ephesians 4:32 continues through Ephesians 5:1-2. All of us must “keep on being kind” in every relationship of life.

A father loves to hear it said of a fine son, “He is just like his father. He walks like him, talks like him, and looks like him.” God, our Father, likes to hear this said of us as his “dear children.”

“And walk in love...” (Eph. 5:2): There are seven “walks” in Ephesians. Two of them refer to the walk of the sinner. The last five “walks” refer to the walk, or life and conduct, of the Christian (see Eph. 2:2, 10; 4:17; 5:2, 8, 15). As Christians were are to imitate God and Christ “who loved us, and hath given himself for us.” We are to live and act lovingly **AS CHRIST** has set the example for us (I Pet. 2:21; John 14:31), Christ so loved us that He gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins – an offering acceptable to God (Rom. 3:25; I John 2:2). “**LOVE**” is the badge of every true Christian (John 13:35; 15:12).

B. Social sins are out of harmony with Christian ideals (Ephesians 5: 3-5).

“But fornication...” (Eph. 5:3): Unsaved people of Ephesus commonly regarded the sins of this verse as matters of indifference. In all circles they were practiced without shame.

“And all uncleanness...” Every kind of impurity.

“Or covetousness...” Closely associated with the prevalent immorality was the other enslaving vice of the heathen world, “covetousness” or “greediness for more.” It implies an insatiable desire for wealth and for the things which gratify appetite. It is therefore a greed that leads to many sins.

“Let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints”; It is “unbecoming” for a saint to be sensual or covetous. Banish such sins in word and in deed.

“Neither filthiness...” (Eph. 5:4): All kinds of indecency. “Baseness, obscenity.”

“Nor foolish talking.” Foolish talking and low jesting are condemned. Paul does not condemn wholesome humor. A sense of humor is a precious gift. A good, hearty laugh is a healthy thing. But “low frivolity which MAKES LIGHT OF SIN IS FORBIDDEN.” Do not talk of indecent things.

“Jesting” means buffoonery. Making a jest of evil things. Wit of doubtful morality, words and suggestions of doubtful and double meaning.

“Not convenient...” Such things are not befitting. “They do not come up to the mark. Instead, let there rather be thanksgiving.” Words of gratitude and praise to God should flow forth from us all.

“For this ye know...” (Eph. 5:5): This verse is very similar to I Cor. 6:9-10. It should be kept in mind that the Scripture teaches that even a believer may fall into these sins mentioned in verse 5. The Bible does not teach that the believer lives a SINLESS LIFE. Christians are not SINLESS, but they SIN LESS. A Christian does not wallow in sin, as a pig does in mud. In Scripture a Christian is likened to a sheep. A sheep may fall into a mud puddle. He will not stay there and will be uncomfortable until he gets out again!

“No whoremonger...” “None guilty of unchastity or of impurity or of GREED – which is IDOLATRY – enjoys inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and God.” Note that here again COVETOUSNESS is PUT UPON A LEVEL WITH GROSS SINS OF THE FLESH. Greed is described as “idolatry,” for it is the debasing worship of gold. Mr. Stingy Man or Mrs. Stingy Woman is in BAD COMPANY. What would happen to the average Christian Church roll if in the light of this teaching the TRUE WORD WERE PLACED OPPOSITE the name in our financial books?

“Hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God”; None of these are heirs of the kingdom. Hence all who keep on practicing such things have no promise of heaven.

C. To justify or excuse sex sins is hateful to God (Ephesians 5:6-7).

“Let no man deceive you with vain words...” (Eph. 5:6): There are always those who FIND EXCUSES FOR SIN. Today some are saying that strict morality is “puritanical,” and is the “relic” of outgrown standards of life. Despise the “vain,” “meaningless words” of those who would “deceive” you.

The Kentucky Edition of the Cincinnati Enquirer today described “The alligator – a dance performed by couples squirming horizontally.” Vice squad detectives raided a nightclub near the University of Cincinnati. They said a nineteen-year-old University of Cincinnati student and a college secretary, age 21, “seemed to go wild in the gestures,” including rubbing each other’s body with their hands.

The policemen said they met with belligerence from the couple, the bartenders and owner and the crowd when they made their arrest.

Criminal Court Judge John W. Keefe fined the couple \$100 and costs Monday when they were convicted of obscene dancing at the club. The jurist said: “This type of public dancing would be objectionable under any and all circumstances, but because of the teen and college age crowd to which this seems to cater, it is all the more shocking and reprehensible.”

“The wrath of God...” “The indignation of God” will be visited upon “the children of disobedience” who willfully defy the laws of God and reject His offers of mercy, grace, and love.

“Be not ye therefore partakers with them” (Eph. 5:7): “So be not you THEIR COMPANIONS.” Have no share with them in their sins.

II. Conduct of Christians to Reprove All Evil (Ephesians 5:8-14)

“But ye were sometimes darkness, but now...” (Eph. 5:8): Once we were “darkness,” but “now in Christ you are light.” It does not say we once were IN THE DARK and now in the light, but that WE WERE DARKNESS and NOW ARE LIGHT. Instead of us being IN THE DARK, the DARKNESS WAS IN US. We were characterized by it.

“Now are ye LIGHT in the Lord”: A true Christian is himself a light, because he has in him the Lord, who is “THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD” (John 8:12). Jesus said of us, “YE are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14-16).

“Walk as children of light”: Sinners “Walk according to the course of this world” (Eph. 2:2), and they “walk as the Gentiles walk” (Eph. 4:17). Christians “Walk in good works... worthy of the calling... in love as children of light... circumspectly” (Eph. 2:10; 4:1; 5:2, 8, 15). Let us “LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.” We are to be holy (Heb. 12:14; Lev. 11:44).

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness...” (Eph. 5:9): Paul combines the metaphors of “light” and “fruit” as that which issues in “all goodness end righteousness and truth,” “Goodness” denotes kindness, or beneficence, or goodness in action. “Righteousness” indicates uprightness or moral rectitude. “Truth” is the opposite of falsehood or hypocrisy and signifies honesty and sincerity.

“Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:10): Testing and so proving, or “demonstrating what is pleasing to the Lord.” Christians find out by experiment and experience what is pleasing to God.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...” (Eph. 5:11): “Works of darkness” are those which please the powers of darkness. We cannot be partners with sinners. Turn the LIGHT on them; “reprove them,” or “expose them.” Convict by turning the light on the darkness (verse 12). Pagan practices are “unfruitful.” They yield no profit, no reward that is good. They produce bitterness, disgrace, and pain.

“But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light...” (Eph. 5:13): If all Christians do not have the courage to expose or reprove evil that its true character may be brought to light, who will do it? Whatever is brought to light is light. Even if wicked, when it is brought to light it enlightens men by revealing its real nature.

“Wherefore he saith, Awake... arise from the dead” (Eph. 5:14): Literally, “Stand up out of the dead ones and Christ shall shine upon thee.” The substance of what God says is in Isa. 60:1, 2; 26:19. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” If this was in the mind of the apostle, he evidently used great liberty with the quotation. His meaning is clear, however. The condition of the “sons of disobedience” was that of moral slumber; indeed, they were in moral and spiritual death. The preaching of the gospel, while rebuking their vices, is a CALL TO NEW LIFE. If they will ROUSE THEMSELVES from their moral stupor and TURN FROM THEIR EVIL PRACTICES, the glorious light from Christ will shine upon them, their souls will be illumined, they will themselves become “CHILDREN OF LIGHT!” The VILEST SINNER may “arise from the dead” by the power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). Christ is READY to SAVE ALL WHO WILL COME (John 6:37).

Sleeper, awake; rise from the dead,
And Christ on thee His light shall shed.”

III. The Controlling Principle in All Relationships Is “The Will of the Lord” (Eph. 5:15-33)

A. We must understand and accept the principle (Ephesians 5:15-21).

1. The need for sharp discernment in an evil day (Eph. 5:15-17).

“See then that ye walk circumspectly...” (Eph. 5:15): “See that you conduct yourselves ever so carefully.” Carefully we must look all around, taking all matters into consideration. Christians must in their social life avoid the frivolity, the thoughtlessness, the folly of the age, and are to live as “wise people” or men.

“Redeeming the time...” (Eph. 5:16): God’s people must be wise in making the “best possible use of their time” or “making the most of every opportunity.” The wisdom of their “walk” would thus consist in their careful endeavor to seize upon every fitting season for doing good. Let no opportunity pass unused. Why? “Because the days are evil.” They are morally corrupt.

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but...” (Eph. 5:17): Converts from paganism must not allow themselves to SLIP BACK INTO SENSELESS FOLLY. Let us “gain insight in the Lord's will.”

2. Exhilaration is to be found in the “filling with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18-20).

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess...” Eph. 5:18): One pagan folly is singled out for rebuke by the apostle – INTOXICATION. No man is so senseless as the drunkard. Intemperance results in “riot” – in debauchery, in every form of excess. “Wine” was at that time the usual intoxicating liquor. Drunkenness is forbidden as a habit. Stop it if you are guilty!

“But be filled with the Spirit”: In contrast with sinful excitements of alcoholic stimulants, the Christian is urged to be “filled with the Spirit.” In contrast with the ribald songs that come from the lips of one who is “drunken with wine,” the Spirit-filled man will be heard singing praises to his Lord.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms...” (Eph. 5:19): “Psalms” refers specifically to the Old Testament Psalms. “Hymns”: Songs of praise. “Songs”: Compositions by members of the Early Church, produced under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In public worship and in social fellowship, we should “speak to one another” in the very language of devotion and praise.

“Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”: The silent music of the rejoicing heart is to accompany the praise of anointed lips. The Lord can hear music of the soul as it is directed to Him.

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God...” (Eph. 5:20): Said Chrysostom: “Let us give thanks not merely for manifest blessings, but also for those that are not manifest, and for those we sometimes receive against our wills.” “The unsearchable riches of Christ” should cause us “at all times” to “give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” All our worship is “IN THE NAME of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is our Lord and Master.

3. Christians must practice mutual subjection to each other (Eph. 5:21).

“Submitting yourselves one to another...” (Eph. 5:21): Being “filled with the Spirit,” we “speaking psalms...” (verse 19), “give thanks” (verse 20), and subordinate ourselves to each other “out of reverence for Christ.” “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Rom. 12:10).

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B. We apply this principle to HUSBAND AND WIFE (Ephesians 5:22-33). 1. Wives must “submit themselves” unto their husbands as to the Lord, with the Church's relation to Christ as their ideal (Eph. 5:22-24).

1. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands...” (Eph. 5:22): Paul enforces the SIMPLEST DUTIES by reference to the MOST SUBLIME MOTIVES. Life in the church must show UNITY. Life in society demands PURITY. The Christian HOME must HAVE LOVE. Domestic life is linked to verse 21 by the term “submission,” Paul has just insisted upon the mutual subjection which all Christians must SHOW TO ONE ANOTHER. Paul begins his instruction to the family by telling Christian women to be in “subjection unto your own husbands.” Some women are more subject to other people than to the wishes of their own husbands – and some “rule the roost,”

The “subjection” of the wife to the husband is that voluntary sub-mission of one Christian to another. She regards the family as a divine institution. Her husband has the responsibility of leadership, of support, of protection, and of loving care. She renders this submission to her husband, as she is submissive to “the Lord.”

“For the husband is the head of the wife...” (Eph. 5:23): This headship is because of a vital and blessed union. It is due to the relation sustained by the husband to Christ, and is like the relation of Christ to his church.

Said Chrysostom: “Wouldst thou that thy wife OBEY THEE? Then have a care for her as Christ does for the Church.” It is the business of a HEAD TO LOOK out for the interests of the body. Christ is not a dictator and unreasonable taskmaster over His Church.

“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be...” (Eph. 5:24): The relation of the wife to the husband is like that of the Church in Christ, a close, tender relation, in which there is no bondage, but freedom, because the service is that of the heart.

It is assumed that the wife has a husband who is “in the Lord” (compare Eph. 6:1), and devoted to her highest interests. She is “subject... in everything” to which his authority justly extends and consistently with duty to Christ, the real Head. When husbands demand what Christ forbids, then the Supreme Head must rule. Let the wife remember, on the other hand, that “she, who holds the heart of her husband and controls the conduct of her children, governs the state. She does it directly, positively, gloriously.”

2. Husbands relate themselves to their wives in sentiment and conduct as the Christ to His Church (Eph. 5:25-31).

“Husbands, love your wives...” (Eph. 5:25) The duties and obligations of husbands toward their wives demand a self-surrender so complete that it can be compared to the redeeming grace of Christ. The love of Christ, which every husband must imitate, was that he GAVE HIMSELF UP TO DIE FOR THE CHURCH. Such tender love of the husband will produce loving obedience on the part of the wife.

John B. Anthony was heard to say over the radio: “My dear man, if you want domestic happiness, multiply tender expressions, continue in gracious, gentlemanly conduct, and don't forget the potency of a few flowers once in a while.”

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it...” (Eph. 5:26): Having mentioned Christ's love for His Church, the apostle now enlarges upon it, assigning the reasons why Christ gave Himself for it: to “sanctify it in this world,” and GLORIFY IT in the next (verse 27). “Washing of water by the word” is a “specific reference to Christian baptism.” ALL in the church must pass through the waters of baptism (Gal. 3:27; John 3:3,5). The “washing of the water” would be of NO AVAIL without the WORD, The power is in the Word of the Lord who offers the gospel and commands baptism (Matt. 28:18-20).

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“That he might present it to himself a glorious church...” (Eph. 5:27): The Church is pictured as the BRIDE OF CHRIST, the Heavenly BRIDEGROOM. The BRIDE was BOUGHT – past (verse 25). The Church is being AVON and CLEANSED through the Word or gospel – present (verse 26). The Church will be PRESENTED IN THE GREAT WEDDING DAY – future (verse 27; Rev. 19:7).

“So ought men to love their own wives...” (Eph. 5:28): As Christ loved his BODY, the Church, so every husband ought to love her who by the marriage tie has become “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23).

“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh...” (Eph. 5:29) Or his own body. Yet, husband and wife are “one flesh” (verse 31). What are most men very careful to do regarding their own bodies? What does this imply as to a man’s actions toward his wife?

“For we are members of his body...” (Eph. 5:30) We are all members of Christ’s BODY, the Church. But the Church is Christ’s BRIDE. Hence the language of Gen. 2:23 where Adam declares that his wife “is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” applies to our relation to Christ.

3. This high standard of the Christ and the Church is emphatically urged for' Christian husbands and wives (Eph. 5:32-33).

“This is a great mystery...” (Eph. 5:32): The “mystery” once hidden but now revealed shows that marriage is hallowed by the fact that it is a symbol of the union of Christ with His Church. This should regulate the CONDUCT of HUSBAND and WIFE in accordance with their know-ledge of a truth so sublime.

“Nevertheless...” (Eph. 5:33): Paul will not dwell longer on the spiritual analogy, but return to the mutual obligations of husbands and wives. No husband is exempt. He is to LOVE HIS WIFE as being a VERY PART OF HIMSELF. And let the “Wife see that she reverence her husband.” With this mutual submission and loyalty the Christian home can be maintained always. Such a home is God’s most gracious gift to man!

QUESTIONS

1. What is the startling exhortation of Eph. 5:1?
2. How is the Christian to “walk” daily (Eph. 5:2; Eph. 4:32)?
3. How many of the “walks” in Ephesians refers to unbelievers? How many to believers (see Eph. 2:2, 10; 4:17; 5:2, 7, 15)?
4. What is the badge of every true Christian (John 13:35; 15:12; I Pet. 2: 19-23)?
5. Can you list three sins that are not to be “once named among you” (Eph. 5:3)?
6. What other things should a Christian not do (Eph. 5:4)?
7. Why should all “fool talk” be shunned (Eph. 5:4)?
8. What do “fools” always do (Prov. 14:9)?
9. In what company does the “covetous” person, “who is an idolater,” find himself (Eph. 5:5)?
10. Is God pleased with those who try to “deceive” others regarding sin (Eph. 5:6)? What attitude should Christians take (Eph. 5:7)?
11. What did Criminal Court Judge John W. Keefe say about “The alligator” dance? How did the vice squad detectives describe the effect of the dance on the dancers?
12. What two states are contrasted in Eph. 5:8-9)?
13. If men want their lives to count against “darkness” in this world, what must they do (Eph. 5:10-14)? Who are the “dead” ones (Eph. 5:14; 2:1)?
14. Why is it sinful for Christians to “fool away” their time (Eph. 5:16)? What should take up all the Christian’s time (Eph. 5:17)?
15. What is the two-fold command of Eph. 5:18? What will the Filling of the Spirit produce (Eph. 5:19, 20; Gal. 5:22, 23; Rom. 12:1-2)?
16. What must all Christians practice toward each other (Eph. 5:21; Rom. 12:10)?
17. Unto whose husbands are wives to be in submission (Eph. 5:22? Although the wife is to be subject to her husband in marriage, what is said about the equality with the man (Gal. 3:28)? In what sense only is the wife “subject” to the husband (Eph. 5:24; see 6:1)?
18. Whom does the husband represent in this picture (Eph. 5:23)? The wife? How is a husband to treat his wife (Eph. 5:25,28)? What are most men careful to do regarding their physical bodies (Eph. 5:29)?
19. By what means does Christ “cleanse” His Body, the Church (Eph. 5:26; John 15:3; 17:7)? What will be the condition of the church when the BRIDE is presented to Christ, the Bridegroom?
20. In speaking of the relationship of husband and wife, what other relation-ship did Paul have in mind (Eph. 5:31-32; Gen. 2:23, 24)? What practical lesson does this great spiritual truth teach (Eph. 5:33)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 24
Ephesians 6

Page 1
Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:11

Memory Verse:

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).

A WONDERFUL WARFARE

“The will of the Lord” (Eph. 5:17) is the CONTROLLING PRINCIPLE, in ALL RELATIONSHIPS of life. After giving divine directions as to the position and CONDUCT of husbands and wives (Eph. 5:23-33), the Holy Spirit gives us a picture of

I. The Christian Household (Ephesians 6:1-9)

A. Relation of parents and children (Ephesians 6:1-4).

1. Exhortation, ideal and standard for children (Eph. 6:1-3).

“Children, obey your parents...” (Eph. 6:1): Moses commanded children to “Honour thy father and thy mother: that they days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Ex. 20:12). The duty of children to “obey your parents” is older than Christianity. It is as old as the parental relation in all ages, lands, and among all peoples. Writers of all nations and times have lamented the neglect of this duty.

“Children now love luxury, have bad manners, contempt for authority, show disrespect for their elders, and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room, They contradict their parents, chatter before company, and tyrannize over their teachers” (Socrates, 467-400 BC).

Parents beget, conceive and bring the child into existence, under God. They care for the child and sustain it. God REQUIRES the child to “obey your parent.” Under the Law of Moses a stubborn, gluttonous and drunkard son who would not “hearken unto” his parents was “stoned with stones, that he DIE; “so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall HEAR, and FEAR” (Deut. 21:18-21).

“In the Lord”: This limits the submission of the “children.” The child is to “obey” the parents UNLESS THAT OBEDIENCE WOULD BREAK GOD’S LAW. “Obey” describes a “readiness to hear,” and the “listening ear of unhesitating attention.” Obedience to “the Lord” takes precedence over the earthly parent (John 14:21-24; Luke 14:26, 27; 17:33).

Jesus is the example of obedience to Christian children. “And he (Jesus) went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:51-52).

“Honour thy father and mother” (Eph. 6:2): Both “parents” are included in the command. Mothers as well as fathers are to be obeyed (Prov. 1:8; 23:22). Such obedience “is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Col. 3:20). Of course, both father and mother must BE HONORABLE and give children a genuine basis for honoring them.

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“The first commandment with promise”: The fifth commandment is the first of the commandments with a SPECIFIC PROMISE (Ex. 20:12).

“That it may be well with thee... live long” (Eph. 6:3): This is the promise, quoted from Ex, 20:12b. This law has promise for “the life that now is,” as well as for “that which is to come.” Obedience to parents assures prosperity and good health. This is literally true. There are exceptions to all such rules, but the promise is being verified by the history of countless families in all lands. Obedience of children to wise, loving parents will result in habits of industry, self-control, self-respect, faithfulness and kindness which, normally, are absolute guarantees of success and of long life!

2. Parents' (fathers') obligation to children (Eph. 6:4).

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath...” (Eph. 6:4): “Fathers,” or as the word also means, “parents” have duties as well as children. Two are named.

“Provoke not...” Do not TEASE children until they get “mad,” or demand unreasonable things that are unfair, harsh, or repressive. When a father or mother fail to set a good example they have no right to expect model conduct from the child or children. A parent who cannot control his own temper is not fit to control a child who has lost his. It has been said that the FIRST ESSENTIAL of training a child is to have more sense than the child!

“But bring them up in the nurture...” “Bring them up in the instruction and admonition of the Lord.” “Chastening” is education by means of discipline, and instruction by means of correction. “Admonition” denotes training by verbal reproof or remonstrance. The father is negligent of his duty if he fails to deal with a child for errors in the past, or to counsel him as to temptations in the future.

Such “nurture” is one of the supreme needs of today. The great peril is that the modern child be allowed to grow up with no respect for authority, with no reverence for age, with no knowledge of Christian standards, and with no habits of self-respect and deference. The church and school ought to supplement the Christian parent, but the home is still the basic training ground for every realm of life. Study II Tim. 3:15; Deut. 6:6-9; 30:15, 16; 32:46, 47,

B. Relations of masters and servants (Ephesians 6:5-9).

1. Slaves are to interpret and discharge all duties as to the Lord who rewards slaves and freeman (Eph. 6:5-8).

“Servants, be obedient to... your masters” (Eph. 6:5): The word is for “bondservants,” “slaves.” In Paul’s day slavery was universally accepted and approved. Slavery is a political relation, established by political governments. Our Lord did not advocate armed, open revolt to abolish slavery. His teaching UNDERMINES SLAVERY and DESTROYS IT BY PROCLAIMING THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN EQUALITY, SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD and the LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

Christian slaves are spoken to, for only such would heed God’s command. A good translation of “fear and trembling in singleness of your heart” is “with conscientious solitude and without duplicity.”

“Not with eye service, as men pleasers...” (Eph. 6:6) Better “slaves of Christ” as Paul rejoiced to call himself (Phil. 1:1), even while “slaves” of men. This is eye-slavery. The worker who LOAFs on the job EXCEPT WHEN the boss is around is an “eye-slave.”

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord...” (Eph. 6:7): The same principle applies to “masters” and “men” today. If all would take heed to the Lord’s admonition, the never settled issue between Capital

and Labor would be solved. If all “servants” did an honest day’s work, “as to the Lord,” and if all employers gave their “servants” that which is “just and equal” (Col. 4:1), we would HAVE NO STRIKES, lockouts, or short-ages – anywhere, or anytime.

“With good will doing service” has been translated: “having his interests at heart.” Employers are paying for this.

“Knowing that whatsoever...” (Eph. 6:8): If a man renders good service anywhere, whether he be slave or free, the Lord will see that he is rewarded.

2. The master has a Master in heaven (Eph. 6:9).

“And, ye masters... your Master also is in heaven” (Eph. 6:9): “Masters,” those in places of authority, must not threaten, mistreat, or abuse those under them. The Roman law allowed masters to treat their slaves as brute beasts, to abuse, or even murder them. Christianity put Christian masters under restraint. “Forbearing threatening,” the habit of cruel masters.

“Your Master also is in heaven...” Masters are exhorted to remember that they also have a Master in heaven who sees them, and to whom your slave is just as dear as you are, and who will hold you to account if you wrong him. Both employer and employee are accountable to God:

II. The Christian Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-20)

A. The Christian's conflict (Ephesians 6:10-13).

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord...” (Eph. 6:10): Paul comes to the subject of conflict. Life on earth after the pattern of the heavens is bound to bring the soul into conflict with all the forces that are opposed to God. While we as Christians face unseen powers, yet all-sufficient resources for protection are easily available.

“Put on the whole armor of God...” (Eph. 6:11) The ancient soldier was not equipped until he had put on his armor. Paul was a prisoner at this time. He was certainly familiar with the armor worn by a Roman soldier, being chained to one for three years!

“Whole armor”: Complete armor in this period included “shield, sword, lance, helmet, greaves, and breastplate” (Thayer). The Christian is to put on God’s armor. Nothing essential for victory IF we put on the “whole armor of God”!

“That ye may be able to stand...” The strength of the Lord and the “whole armor of God” are needed because the enemy pictured as none other than the Devil, the great Adversary, the slanderous Accuser, the uncompromising foe of all followers of Christ. He is a crafty foe and knows the weak spots in the Christian’s armor. The armor has weapons of defense, and of offense.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood...” (Eph. 6:12) “For our wrestling is not against flesh-and-blood opponents, but against the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers of this present darkness; against the spiritual forces of evil in the supernatural sphere.”

Our “wrestling” is a personal, individual hand-to-hand encounter with the enemy. Our fight is not against mere humans, “flesh and blood.” Evil spirits or angels who sinned and were cast out of heaven are subject to Satan, their prince (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Satan is a CLEVER DEVIL and uses evil spirits and evil men to keep us from enjoying our heavenly blessings here or hereafter! In this day of spiritual peril and assault, be fully armored. Repetition gives emphasis to Paul’s counsel (verses 13, 10-11).

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B. The details of our armor (Ephesians 6:14-17).

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...” (Eph. 6:14): “The girdle, military belt, kept the armor in place and supported the sword. So TRUTH HOLDS the Christian armor and supports the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.” Peter commands: “Gird up the loins of your mind” (I Pet. 1:13). We must be frank, true, and honest with ourselves and with God.

“Breastplate of righteousness”: The “breastplate” protects the breast, chest, and the vital organs within. It is closely related to the “girdle of truth”, for “righteousness” here denotes uprightness, or moral integrity. A man who is conscious of being in the wrong is usually a coward; a man who KNOWS HE IS RIGHT can withstand a multitude and enters the conflict without fear.

“And your feet shod with the preparation...” (Eph. 6:15): The strong military sandals not only protected the feet of the warrior but enabled him to stand in slippery places and to move with quick and certain step. So the Christian soldier needs to be equipped for battle with that “preparation” which only “the gospel,” with its message of PEACE, CAN GIVE! “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace...” (Isa. 52:7). Our Lord “made peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20).

“Above all, taking the shield of faith...” (Eph. 6:16): The shield of the Roman was four feet long, two and one-half feet wide. Held of the left arm it could protect the whole body. Usually it was made of wood and covered with leather. For the Christians warrior “faith” forms such a shield “with which you will be able to extinguish all the fire-dipped darts of the evil one.”

The reference is to arrows tipped with tow, dipped in pitch, and set on fire before they were discharged. These “fiery darts,” striking the shield would fall extinguished and harmless at the warrior’s feet.

We must STUDY GOD’S WORD to INCREASE OUR FAITH (Rom. 10:17; II Tim. 2:15). Thus firm and unwavering confidence in God, a continual reliance upon God, affords for the BELIEVER a SAFE PROTECTION AGAINST THOSE SWIFT ARROWS OF TEMPTATION WHICH MIGHT INFLAME THE HEART WITH ANGER OR WITH LUST!

“And take the helmet of salvation...” (Eph. 6:17): The Roman soldier wore on his head a cap made of thick leather or brass. It was fitted to the head, and guarded it from blows. “He put a helmet of salvation on his head” (Isa. 59:17). See I Thess. 5:8. We have a Saviour who SAVES and KEEPS US. That gives a Christian soldier courage for the conflict (Col. 1:12, 14; Rom. 2:7).

“And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” All the spiritual armor mentioned by the apostle was for the purpose of DEFENSE. The only WEAPON OF OFFENSE he now names. It is enough. There is need of no other. It is “THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD”! The gospel message placed in the hands of the Christian warrior must be firmly grasped and used with skill. “For the word of God is quick (living), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a DISCERNER of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Jesus beat off the devil’s attack by using the Word of God (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). The Christian warrior filled with the SPIRIT must “PREACH THE WORD... in season, out of season” (II Tim. 4:2). As we study and meditate on God’s Word, the Spirit can supply the Christian with the needed portion or thought at the right time.

C. A call for continuous, prayerful watchfulness (Ephesians 6:18).

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“Praying always with all prayer...” (Eph. 6:18): This chapter presents the church as a MIGHTY ARMY, pressing on in this spiritual conflict, maintaining the Word of God in all its purity, and thus winning souls for Christ. Here we have the whole set-up of an army. The Commanding General is the Lord Jesus. The Power to operate is the Holy Spirit of God. Our Equipment is the whole armor of God. The supreme weapon is the Sword of God. The signal corps is ALL PRAYER, which keeps us in constant touch with the base of supplies. “Praying.... in the Spirit” defines the character of true prayer. It is offered under the guidance of the Spirit, in fellowship with the Spirit, in dependence upon the Spirit. There must be vigilance and persistence in prayer. “Pray, and not... faint.”

“For all saints”: The Christian warrior prays not only for himself, but also for all the people of God, for all the army of the redeemed.

“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

D. God's ambassador calls for special prayer for himself (Eph. 6:19-20).

“And for me... an ambassador in bonds” (Eph. 6:19-20): Paul wishes their prayer for courage for himself. The apostle is now an “old man” (Philemon 9) and feels the dignity of his position as Christ’s ambassador though “in a chain.” Paul will wear a chain at the close of his life in Rome (II Tim. 1:16). He does not desire prayers in behalf of his life or comfort, but that he may “boldly... make known the mystery of the gospel.” As an ambassador is sent to a foreign court to declare the will of the king, so he, though in chains, was Christ’s ambassador sent to Rome to declare the will of his King.

III. The Conclusion (Ephesians 6:21-24)

A. The commendation of Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21,22; Acts 20:4; Col. 4:7f; II Tim. 4:12).

“But... Tychicus... shall make known to you all things” (Eph. 6:21): Tychicus seems to have been a native of Asia. He joined Paul on his third missionary journey, was with the apostle in his present imprisonment, and would tell the brethren at Ephesus “all things” about Paul.

B. Benediction and Blessing (Ephesians 6:23-24).

QUESTIONS

1. What is the children's responsibility to parents (Eph. 6:1; Prov. 1:8; Col. 3:20)?
2. What special reward is promised to obedient children (Eph. 6:2, 3; Ex. 20:12)?
3. What is said about the equal authority that father and mother have toward their children (Eph. 6:2; Prov. 1:8; 23:22)?
4. What is the father's duty negatively (Eph. 6:4)? Positively (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6; Deut. 6:6,7)?
5. Why shouldn't the father exasperate his children (Co. 3:21)?
6. How could even the duties of a slave (or modern employee) be sanctified (Eph. 6:5)? What did the apostle think about a Christian working hard just when the employer is looking (Eph. 6:6)?
7. What was the slave's (or modern employee) abiding encouragement (Eph. 6:8)?
8. To what supreme Master should the slave's master, or the modern employer, bow (Eph. 6:9)?
9. Where will the believer find strength for his warfare (Eph. 6:10; Rom. 8:37)?
10. What must every Christian have to be victorious (Eph. 6:11)? Who are the opposing forces in this conflict (Eph. 6:12)?
11. Why is the possession of truth an indispensable preparation for victory (Eph. 6:14; Matt. 22:29; Luke 4:4, 8, 10)?
12. How does the believer's "righteousness" before God give courage (Eph. 6:14; Rom. 8:33, 34; I Pet. 5:8, 9; Rev. 12:10)?
13. To what preparation does Eph. 6:15 refer (Rom. 5:1; Isa. 52:7; Col. 1:20)?
14. What will stop all the "fiery darts" of the devil (Eph. 6:16; Prov. 3:5)?
15. What is the "helmet of salvation" (Eph. 6:17; I Thess. 5:8; Tit. 2:13)?
16. What is the only weapon mentioned for offensive warfare (Eph. 6:17)? Whose "sword" is this (II Tim. 3:16)?
17. What is the last item in the armor of God (Eph. 6:18)?
18. When, and how, should prayer be made (Eph. 6:18-19; 1:15-23; 3:14-21)?
19. What was Tychicus called (Eph. 6:21)?
20. What has Ephesians told us concerning the LOVE OF GOD (Eph. 1:4, 6; 2:4; 3:17-19; 5:2, 26; 6:23)?

YEAR 6 - LESSON 25 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 25
Philippians 1

Page 1
Memory Verse: Philippians 1:21

Memory Verse:

“For to me to live in Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

CHRIST OUR LIFE

Philippi originally was called Krenides, or “The Little Fountains,” because it was near to numerous springs. The region was important because of the rich deposits of gold and silver in the mountains to the south, and further because through a pass in these mountains lay the natural trade routes from the east to the west, from Asia to Europe.

Why Famous?

The name of Philippi is famous not so much for its relationship to Philip of Macedon as for its connection with the Apostle Paul. The modern world knows Philippi not because on its plains in 42 BC a battle was fought which led to the defeat of Brutus and Cassius and the fall of the Roman Republic by Octavian and Anthony. The Roman Empire was born on the plains of Philippi. Augustus in appreciation made Philippi a Roman colony (31 BC-14 AD).

Philip II of Macedon

Philip II of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great, recognized the strategic value of this region. In 356 BC, four years after he took charge of the government, Philip annexed the territory, enlarged and fortified the town, and gave it the name Philippi, “Pertaining to Philip.”

Working the gold mines with energy, Phillip secured from them more than 1,000 talents a year, and found it possible to provide for the West a currency in gold. With this vast revenue Philip enlarged the Macedonian army, and developed the fine art of bribery. He affirmed “that no fortress was impregnable to whose walls an ass laden with gold could be driven.”

A French writer summed it up tersely: “This gold of Krenides spread itself over Greece, preceding the phalanx like an advance guard and opening more gates than the battering-rams and catapults.”

The Church at Philippi

Luke in Acts 16:6-40 relates the fascinating and dramatic story of the founding of the church at Philippi. Paul was on his Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-18:22), 50-53 A.D. “Lydia, a seller of purple... a certain” slave girl, and “the keeper of the prison,” a jailer, was the charter list of the church at Philippi begun in 50 or 51 A.D. (Acts. 16:14, 16, 27f). They were the “firstfruits” of the gospel on the continent of Europe.

The Epistle

Paul was in prison in Rome (61-63 A.D.), about ten years after he had founded the Church in Philippi, and about three or four years after he had last visited there. Had they forgotten him? “I was uncommonly happy in the Lord,” he writes from his Roman jail, “because of late your thoughtfulness toward me came to

life again, a matter in which you were interested, but you lacked opportunity” (Phil. 4:10). Then Epaphroditus arrived from far away Philippi “to minister to my wants” (Phil. 2:25-30; 4:18). Paul was deeply touched, and when Epaphroditus was able to travel, Paul sent him to Philippi with this lovely letter of four chapters, 104 verses.

It is, letter like, about a number of things. It contains a beautiful expression of gratitude for the love and gifts of the Philippian saints (Phil. 4:15-18).

Above all, it is a letter of JOY. A famous commentator has said, “The sum of the epistle is ‘I rejoice; rejoice.’” Some twenty times in the epistle occur such words as “joy,” “peace,” “rejoice,” “thanksgiving,” and “content.”

I. The Preface (Philippians 1:1-11)

A. The salutation (Philippians 1:1,2).

“Paul and Timotheus...” (Phil. 1:1): Timothy was with Paul in Rome, had labored with him at Philippi, and was much esteemed by Paul as a brother and fellow laborer in the gospel. Timothy probably wrote the letter at Paul’s dictation, as he helped in the writing of II Corinthians, Colossians, 1 and II Timothy and Philemon.

“The servants of Jesus Christ.” Paul designates himself and Timothy as “servants”; he describes his readers as “saints.” The writer does not refer to himself as an apostle. His authority is not called in question. “Servants” literally is “bondservants,” SLAVE of “Jesus Christ.”

“To all the saints in Christ Jesus...at Philippi.” “Saints” was the common term applied in the time of Paul to all Christians. The equivalent to “believers” or “brethren,” its deep implication must not be forgotten. The root idea is that of SEPARATION and CONSECRATION. It is an ideal term, indicating not moral perfection, but a relationship to God that makes purity of heart and conduct an obligation for all to whom the term applied. “Saints” are encouraged to BECOME in ACTUAL EXPERIENCE what they already are in the mind and purpose of God.

“With the bishops and deacons”: Two classes of men are found in churches organized by an apostle. “Elders” and “Bishops” in the New Testament Church are the same, “only different names of the same office.” Paul calls the “elders” of Ephesus “bishops” (Acts 20:17, Am. Revised Version). In Titus 1:5, 7 Paul calls an “elder” a “bishop.” “Overseer” is the nature of the office of “bishop” as translated from the Greek word “Episcopos.”

“And deacons.” The duties of the deacons are supposed to be explained by the work of the “SEVEN DEACONS” ordained in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 6:1-7; see also I Tim. 3:8-13. Diakonoi suggest raising a dust by hastening!

“Grace be unto you...” (Phil. 1:2) The usual Pauline salutation, a prayer for them. “Grace” denotes the unmerited favor of God – all the boundless blessings secured for man by the redeeming love of God. “Peace” can come only through the “grace” of God. It is PEACE WITH GOD, peace WITH MEN of good will and PEACE in the inner recesses of ONE’S BEING.

“Jesus” is the human, personal name of our Saviour. “Christ” is His official title, as the “Anointed One,” the Messiah, who had been appointed and empowered to accomplish salvation for mankind. “Lord” is the title denoted true deity recognized by all who accepted him as Master and worship Him as the Son of God.

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B. The Thanksgiving (Philippians 1:3-8).

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you...” (Phil. 1:3) Friendship is a priceless gift. The unbelievers of Philippi had treated Paul harshly (Acts 16:22-24). The Christians had from the first treated Paul graciously (Acts 16:16,33,34,40). Every time he thought of them he thanked God for them. Paul always cultivated a cheerful and thankful heart. FRIENDSHIP and MEMORY united to form a twin cause for thanksgiving as Paul “remembered” the “saints” at Philippi. “God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December.” As Paul in a Roman prison remembered his Christian friends in Philippi it was like a rich perfume wafted from a distant field.

“Always in every prayer of mine for you all...” (Phil. 1:4) Paul is a happy prisoner as in Philippi when he and Silas sang praises at mid-night though in prison (Acts 16:25). Daily he prayed for the churches he had established. In the case of this faithful church he did it “with joy”. This church had nothing in it to hinder his emotions of gratitude and praise.

“For your fellowship in the gospel from...” (Phil. 1:5): The apostle was thankful and joyous that “from the first day until now,” Philippi had constantly sympathized with him and “amply supplied” all his needs (Phil. 2:25; 4:10, 18). This means MORE THAN the contribution of money for Paul’s support. “Fellowship” means to share with, to participate in the same things. It was a MISSIONARY church. As a WHOLE the church from the beginning worked with Paul to SPREAD THE GOSPEL to “every creature” (Mark 16:15-16). A church full of such workers is cause enough for a prayer of thanksgiving. The apostle has faith in them that they will continue true to the gospel until they die and go to meet Christ, or until Christ comes again (verse 6).

“Even as... I have you in my heart.” (Phil. 1:7) Love begets love. The pastor who, like Paul, holds his people in his heart will find them holding him in their hearts. Paul loved them as the first fruits of his labors in Europe. The church was “in my heart, as all of you share with me in divine grace, whether it be in my imprisonment or in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.”

“For God is my record... long after you all” (Phil. 1:8): With a tender love like that of Christ, God knew how he yearned for them and their good.

C. The prayer (Philippians 1:9-11)

“And this I pray, that your love may abound...” (Phil. 1:9) He does not pray that his friends may have love for one another and for him. They HAVE THAT LOVE ALREADY. He prays that their “knowledge,” full spiritual and moral knowledge, may “grow ever richer and richer.” He prays that wiser “judgment,” or keen discernment so as to distinguish differences in specific cases may be theirs.

“That ye may approve things that are excellent...” (Phil. 1:10) Increased “knowledge” and “judgment” enable a growing Christian to “approve” the right things and CONDEMN THE WRONG THINGS, “without offense” or causing others to stumble.

“The day of Christ.” Faithful service will be complete (verse 6), and receive its reward (II Tim. 4:6; I John 2:28).

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness...” (Phil. 1:11): The fruits which produce “righteousness,” The FRUIT of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23) will result in living holy, helpful lives. Such lives “come through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.”

II. Paul's Experience in Rome (Philippians 1:12-26)

A. Imprisoned and opposed (Philippians 1:12-20),

“But I would ye should understand, brethren...” (Phil. 1:12): Paul was a prisoner at Rome, awaiting the decision of Nero. The Philippians were grieved, the outcome was unknown and uncertain, so far as their knowledge was concerned. He assures them that God **OVERRULED HIS IMPRISONMENT** for the “furtherance of the gospel.”

“Get this clear, then, that this salvation of God is sent to the gentiles and they will listen... But Paul remained for two whole years in his rented lodging and welcomed every one who came in to see him. He preached the kingdom of God and gave instructions regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, altogether openly and without hindrance” (Acts 28:28, 30-31).

Chained to the wrist of a rude soldier, day and night, sleeping or waking, was doubtless a trying experience to Paul’s sensitive disposition. How small his audiences were in his “rented lodging.” Justice was long delayed. What was to be expected at the judgment seat of Nero? Yet “my experiences have turned out **FOR** rather than **AGAINST** the advance of the gospel.”

“So that my bonds in Christ are manifest...” (Phil. 1:13): The Palace or Praetorian Guard originally numbered 10,000 and was centered on the Emperor’s Palace. They had double pay and special privileges and became so powerful that emperors had to court their favor. Paul had contact with one after another of these soldiers. As a military prisoner, Paul was under charge of its commander, the prefect. The necessity of reporting regularly would make him well known, and would give him many opportunities to preach Christ there and elsewhere. Some of “Caesar’s house-hold” (Phil. 4:22) became Christians. Doubtless many of the soldiers were won to Christ. Paul’s influence was extended.

“And many of the brethren... waxing confident... are... bold to speak the word.” (Phil. 1:14) His presence in Rome, and the way Paul “redeemed the time, because the days were evil” (Eph. 5:16), gave new courage and strength to the Christians of the Imperial City. There is a contagion in **COURAGE AND PASSION**. Some Christians may have lost heart and some may have been unfaithful to the Lord. When they say how Paul **BORE HIS BONDS**, they began **ANEW** their faithful testimony for Christ, and “without fear.”

“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy...” (Phil. 1:15): The **MOTIVES** of preachers, teachers, and Mr. Plain Church Member are not always pure. “Some... are preaching Christ out of jealousy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.” Those envious of Paul were probably Judaizing Christians.

“The one preach Christ of contention...” (Phil. 1:16) It is possible to preach a pure gospel with the **WRONG MOTIVES**. They wanted to “hurt” Paul and his influence whenever possible, “intending to add distress to my bonds.” Members who teach a class in a spirit of envy or spite, and then run away to another church for communion to “hurt” the preacher are only hurting themselves!

“But the other of love...” (Phil. 1:17): Thank God for those who “of love” supported Paul because he preached the good tidings that they themselves were setting forth. They knew Paul was not sent to Rome because he was an evil doer, but because he was “set for the defense of the gospel.” God had sent him there to **PREACH THE GOSPEL** (Acts 23:11)!

“What then?” (Phil. 1:18) So anxious was Paul to have the gospel preached that regardless of the **MOTIVES** of the preachers, the apostle rejoiced because “**CHRIST IS PREACHED**”!

“For I know that this shall turn... through your prayer.” (Phil. 1:19) As the love of Paul led him to make **INTERCESSION FOR THE PHILIPPIANS**, he now takes it for granted that they will pray for his release from prison, if it be God’s will. He strongly hopes to see them again (verse 26).

“That in nothing I shall be ashamed.” (Phil. 1:20) Whether his bonds lead to “life, or by death”, Paul’s trust is that the Spirit will give him such boldness that “the honor of Christ may be enhanced in my body.” Paul is uncertain as to the outcome of his trial before Nero. There is no uncertainty about his own role, only that he may glorify Christ!

B. In the face of death (Philippians 1:21-26).

“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21) Paul’s profound philosophy of life is summed up in this verse. The aim, purpose, the inspiration and the sum of his life was Christ. “To die” is “gain.” This is an old word for any gain or profit, interest on money (so in papyri). So for Paul “to die” is to “cash in both principal and interest and so to have more of Christ than when living... Paul faces death with independence and calm courage.”

“But... I shall choose I know not.” (Phil. 1:22) Paul does not mean “to die is gain” because it will bring an end to pain and sorrow and toil, but because it will BRING MORE OF CHRIST. Death will make possible the full enjoyment of those “unsearchable riches of Christ” which are NOW KNOWN ONLY IN PART. Death issues in what is desirable. Such is Paul’s conclusion when he considers the comparative advantages of life and death for himself. It is not with a VIEW TO HIMSELF ALONE that such a possibility is to be faced. HE MUST THINK OF OTHERS and the relation that a continuation of HIS LIFE WORK MAY SUSTAIN TO THEM. The desire for death may be selfish; it may be cowardly; it may be unchristian!

Paul assumes that his continued life will result in “fruit” from his “labor” or service. More souls will be saved; “saints” will be strengthened. With that assured shall he choose to LIVE or DIE? He is in doubt. “I cannot tell which to choose.”

“For I am in a strait betwixt two...” (Phil. 1:23): “I am hemmed in on both sides” (Lightfoot). He feels pressure to live on, and pressure to die and be with Christ.

“Depart” means to “unloose.” It pictures a ship being unloosed from its moorings, or the losing of tent pins for breaking camp (II Cor. 5:1).

“To be with Christ” denotes conscious blessedness, the “beautiful vision,” perfect communion with Christ, unbroken fellowship with him, participation in his divine glory. Paul knew that for himself it would be an experience FAR BETTER THAN LIFE!

“Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful...” (Phil. 1:24): However, the apostle can not overlook what his death or life will mean to his friends and converts. It is with no false pride that he writes: “On your account it is more necessary that I remain in the body.” They were dependent upon his sympathy, his counsel, his guidance, and his prayers. His eagerness to meet their need outweighs his desire for personal gain. “And...I know that I shall abide...” (Phil. 1:25): In view of what he may be to his friends, his great choice is made. Indeed he is not only willing to live or die, he is deeply convinced that he is to live and continue his blessed ministry for the “saints” at Philippi.

“That your rejoicing... by my coming to you again.” (Phil. 1:26): He is assured that the Philippians will REJOICE OVER A VISIT WITH HIM (see Phil. 2:24).

III. A Practical Exhortation to Steadfastness (Philippians 1:27-30)

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ...” (Phil. 1:27) “Be sure to conduct yourself as citizens of Christ that are worthy of the Gospel.” The Philippians were citizens of the Roman Empire. They were controlled by the Roman code. For the Christians the rule or law of his life is that it be “worthy of the gospel of Christ.” As Christians they had laws and regulations that were just as binding as the

laws of the Imperial City. The Gospel is not just a message to be believed; it is a **RULE, TO BE OBEYED**. It is the Gospel of Christ who has **ALL AUTHORITY**” or “**POWER... in heaven and in earth**” (Matt. 28:18).

“Whether I come... or else be absent.” Paul urges the Philippians so to live that if he is present he may observe in them such conduct, or if he is “absent” he may hear a favorable report of them. He does not wish their behavior to be regulated by mere accident of the “presence” or “absence” of a friend.

“Stand fast in one spirit...” The reference is motto the Holy Spirit, but to that disposition, that character, that moral temper which the Holy Spirit creates. They are to be one in heart and mind. Then Paul will “know that you are standing firm in **ONE SPIRIT AND ONE MIND, AS YOU ARE JOINED IN CONFLICT FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.**”

“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries...” (Phil. 1:28) Had they been under another outbreak of heathen violence at Philippi such as Paul and Silas endured (Acts 16:19-24)? “Terrified” describes those who are “intimated” by the unexpected appearance of opposition or the sudden attack of an enemy. It describes mainly Christians today. Their faith is swept away by the first breath of criticism, or antagonism. A single book, or news item about the “**DEATH OF GOD**” by atheistic teachers, writers, or preachers and the convictions of a lifetime are overthrown, or paralyzed!

Moderns like Protestant Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike of California questioned whether doctrines like the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, and the Incarnation mean anything in a godless world. One September he left on Sabbatical for Cambridge University in England “to find out what I really believe.” Bishop Pike rejected “the accepted views of God and prayer.” “Everything I'm saying has a **QUESTION MARK AT THE END,**” he explains. Too bad! Exposed to the rantings of atheism at Cambridge for a season, the bishop and his son were returning to America and stopped in New York. The son put a bullet through his brain! This is the end of **ATHEISM** – death of body, but not of **SOUL**. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27), so Bishop Pike and his son, a suicide because of his father's atheistic philosophy, will both face **GOD!** “**The FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART, THERE IS NO GOD**” (Psalm 14:1).

“For unto you it is given... to believe on him... suffer” (Phil. 1:29): Two privileges are granted to the Philippian Christians and to us today:

1. The privilege of “believing” in Christ.
2. That of “suffering” for “His sake.”

No one should **COURT SUFFERING** but when it comes it may be endured in such a spirit as to **ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF CHRIST**. “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. **YET** if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.” (I Peter 4:14-16)

Suffering endured in our Lord's work, then, may be regarded as a gift or arrangement of God's grace!

“Having the same conflict which ye saw in me...” (Phil. 1:30): The Philippians “**SAW**” **PAUL Suffer** (Acts 16:19-40; I Thess. 2:2) as now they have **HEARD ABOUT IT IN ROME** from Epaphroditus. They now **SHARE** in Paul's struggle, They can be sure that one who continues **FAITHFUL** and **UNAFRAID** **NOW** in the face of the enemy will receive at his Lord's return the victor's imperishable crown!

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QUESTIONS

1. What was Philippi originally called? Why?
2. Who named Philippi, and why? What was Philip's comment regarding the power of gold to bribe?
3. Who wrote the epistle to the Philippians (Phil. 1:1)? Key words? In what did Paul "joy," or "rejoice" (Phil. 1:4,18; 2:16,17; 3:3; 4:1).
4. To what three classes of believers was the epistle addressed, and which class was mentioned first (Phil. 1:1)? Define each class.
5. By whom was the church at Philippi founded (Acts 16:4-40)? When? Name three converts of this church?
6. What was Paul's condition when he wrote this epistle to the Philippians (Phil. 1:13, 14; 4:22)?
7. For what did Paul thank God (Phil. 1:3-5; 2:25; 4:10, 18)?
8. What did Paul ask God to give these Philippian Christians (Phil. 1:9-11).
9. Had Paul's imprisonment hindered these Philippian Christians (Phil. 1:12, 13; Acts 28:28, 30-31; 4:22)?
10. How were other believers influenced by Paul's imprisonment (Phil. 1:14)?
11. In what way did some men preach Christ (Phil. 1:15)? How did some preachers in Paul's day add to his burdens (Phil. 1:16)? Can you name one effective way to preach Christ (Phil. 1:17)? What was Paul's chief consolation (Phil. 1:18; Rom. 1:16)?
12. Why did Paul believe the annoying efforts of workers who were playing politics would be turned to his good (Phil. 1:19)? What did he count upon (Phil. 1:20)?
13. Can you explain "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21)?
14. Why did Paul have no fear of death, if that was God's will for him (Phil. 1:23, 20)?
15. With what word does Paul describe "death" for the Christian (Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:1)?
16. What may have made Paula bit "homesick for heaven" (II Cor. 12:2)? To be "absent from the body" meant what to Paul (II Cor. 5:8)? Although the body "sleeps" until the resurrection, what will the departed spirit do when Jesus comes (I Thess. 4:13-14; Phil. 1:20, 21; Heb. 1:3)?
17. How do we know that Paul did not have the idea he could communicate with his friends after death (Phil. 1:24)? What was the only way he could be of service to the Philippians for their spiritual advancement (Phil. 1:25)?
18. What did Paul say about the believer's "conversation" or "citizenship" (Phil. 1:27a)?
19. What was one thing Paul wanted to hear about them, even though not permitted to come to them (Phil. 1:27b)?
20. Who is always working to break up the unity of the church then, and now (Phil. 1:29)? How did Paul know it is "given" to some people to suffer on behalf of Christ as well as to preach (Acts 9:15, 16; Matt. 5:12; I Pet. 2:20, 21)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year VI

Second Quarter

Lesson 26
Philippians 2

Page 1
Memory Verse: Philippians 2:5-8

Memory Verse:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

Several years ago the mayor of Boston let his beard grow for days, put on a suit of old clothes, and went out to see how “the other half of the world lives.” He scouted through the slums of the city, and went for a night's lodging in a very cheap boarding house. He was told to chop wood for his bed and a breakfast of thin oatmeal with skimmed milk.

He had never used an axe in his life and was having a hard time earning his bed and board. Finally a young man stepped up and said: “Give it here, mister. You don't know how to swing an axe.”

When the young man had finished, the Mayor said, “Here's my card, son. Call on me at four this afternoon, and I'll see that you get a job.”

The young man looked at the card and said to himself, “Poor man, he's CRAZY. THINKS HE'S THE MAYOR.” Nevertheless curiosity got the better of him and at four he was ushered into the mayor's office. He was given the job as promised with the exhortation, “Now, KEEP STILL, and don't tell anybody about this.”

But the young man did TELL, and the city newspapers carried the headline. “THE GREATEST SOCIAL STOOP IN THE WORLD.”

Yet that “stoop” is pallid, insipid, when compared with the STOOP OUR BLESSED LORD ACCOMPLISHED WHEN HE HUMBLERD HIMSELF TO BECOME OUR SAVIOUR. HIS, INDEED, IS THE GREATEST STOOP ON THE ENTIRE WORLD!

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8).

I. Challenging Exhortations (Philippians 2:1-18)

A. Exhortation to Unity (Philippians 2:1-4).

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ...” (Phil. 2:1) Paul uses four conditions in this verse, assuming the condition to be true, “IF” implies no doubt of the existence of the four motives. It is simply a tender form of appeal to what he knows does exist.

The “therefore” links the thought with that previous injunction of Phil. 1:27, so that “ye stand fast in one spirit, with ONE MIND striving together for the faith of the gospel!” The first ground is that of the blessed experiences which the Philippians share in common with Christians.

“If there exists any ground for exhortation based on your being in Christ.” And “exhortation in Christ” must be heeded.

“If any comfort of love.” The second ground of appeal is that of the tender persuasiveness of love. If love is an incentive to action, they should heed the apostle's exhortation. “Comfort” is “consolation” in the Revised Version and “persuasive appeal of love” in Berkeley.

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“If any fellowship of the Spirit.” This is the third ground of appeal. As believers in Christ they have become partakers of the Holy Spirit. They should “keep the unity” which the Spirit gives “in the bond of peace.”

“If any bowels and mercies”: The fourth ground of appeal is found in those emotions that the Holy Spirit himself inspires, “tender mercies and compassions.”

“Fulfill ye my joy...” (Phil. 2:2): Rather, “fill full.” Paul’s cup of joy will be full if the Philippians will only keep on having unity of thought kind feeling. They had given him much joy (Phil. 4:1-10), but he desires that they be “like-minded.” In other words, they should be harmonious in soul, hearts that beat together in tune with Christ and with each other. “Having the same love” indicates “the cherishing of mutual affection.” “Being of one accord, of one mind” has been translated with even more fullness of expression, “with harmony of feeling giving your minds to ONE and the SAME OBJECT.”

The Christian UNITY for which Paul pleads is something far deeper than merely saying, “I Believe” to a common creed, or union in a form of worship, or fellowship in a common task. It is UNITY of sentiment and mutual love. Division and strife are sinful and ruin the fellowship of brethren.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Cor. 1:10). To have UNITY of HEART and ACTION among God’s people we must walk in the light of God’s word. We must reject human inventions (Col. 2:20-22; Matt. 15:7-9).

“Let nothing be done through strife...” (Phil. 2:3) “You will not act out of fractional motives.” “Let nothing be done through partisanship and pomposity.” A partisan spirit encourages strife that Paul now sees in Rome (Phil. 1:15-17). He does not want such a spirit at Philippi.

“Or vainglory.” Or out of vanity. Denotes a boastful pride; a spirit which inclines one to make great claims for himself and runs others down.

Literally, it is emptiness of ideas. An empty wagon always makes more noise than one that is loaded. Like Christ we must be “meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29), and “modestly treat one another as your superiors” (Goodspeed).

“Look... every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:4): Seek to promote the well being of others (see I Cor. 9:22), not keeping an eye on the main chance of number one, but for the good of others.

B. Exhortation to the imitation of Christ (Philippians 2:5-11).

“Let this mind be in you...” (Phil. 2:5): Paul points to Christ as the EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY AND CONSECRATION TO THE GOOD OF OTHERS. We Christians must become LIKE CHRIST in CHARACTER AND DEEDS. Our Lord “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us AN EXAMPLE, that we should follow his steps” (I Pet. 2:21f).

“Who, being in the form of God...” (Phil. 2:6) Rather, “existing.” “Being in the form of God,” means He “possessed the nature of God.” This refers to the state of our Saviour before he took human form and was born in Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:1).

“Form.” There is no notion of a body or “form for God,” but simply the character of God in his real essence. Christ “is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15; see John 1:1). “As a sword in its scabbard, both of the same form, so the Son existed in the Godhead.”

“Thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Jesus did not consider His state of equality with God something to cling to at any cost, when by giving up this glory and holding on to the nature of God, He could take the form or fashion of man and SAVE MANKIND!

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Of what did Christ EMPTY Himself? Not of His divine nature. That was impossible. He continued to be THE SON OF GOD. Without doubt Christ GAVE UP HIS ENVIRONMENT OF GLORY. He took upon Himself limitations of place (space) and of knowledge and of power, though still on earth retaining more of these than any mere man could. It is here that men should show restraint and modesty, though it is hard to believe that Jesus limited Himself by error of knowledge and certainly not by error of conduct. He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). “He stripped himself of the insignia of majesty” (Lightfoot).

“But made himself of no reputation...” (Phil. 2:7) “Empties himself” or “laid aside” (His glory in heaven) and “became like other men” in a fleshly body. He exchanged divine glory for human lowliness. God “sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin...” (Rom. 8:3). “Wherefore it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

“And being found in fashion as a man...” (Phil. 2:8): “Fashion” refers to the OUTWARD appearance of Christ. It was altogether human. This voluntary humiliation on the part of Christ Paul is pressing as an example upon the Philippians. If possible, read A. B. Bruce’s THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST.

“He humbled himself... the death of the cross.” This is infinite condescension. “The death of the cross” is the bottom rung in the ladder from the Throne of God. Jesus came all the way down to the most despised death of all, a condemned criminal on the accursed cross.

“The death of the cross.” A death reserved for criminals. Under the Jewish law when a body was stoned, it was then hanged on a tree as a shame and curse (Deut. 21:23) as Paul knew (Gal. 3:13). We glory in the cross as “the wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:23-25; Heb. 12:2).

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him...” (Phil. 2:9): God raised Jesus from the dead and gave Him back “in heaven and on earth” all that he had renounced to come to earth because of our Lord’s voluntary and supreme humility (Matt. 28:18). The humble name of Jesus is “ABOVE EVERY NAME.” It denotes ALL THAT JESUS IS NOW KNOWN TO BE, as Son of God and Son of Man, as divine Saviour and Redeemer.

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...” (Phil. 2:10) It is not “at the name of Jesus,” but “IN THE NAME OF JESUS” that homage is to be rendered. Paul does not mean that worshippers should bow at the mention of the word “Jesus,” but that in virtue of his saving work and divine power every knee should bow before him in worship and in prayer and every tongue should be vocal in confession and in praise (verse 11). This is universal acknowledgement of the majesty and power of Jesus who carries his human name and nature to heaven.

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, ‘Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’” (Rev. 5:13)

There will be NO INFIDELS or ATHEISTS in hell! Those who were unfaithful to or denied our Lord and God here before they “go away into everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46) SHALL “CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER” (Phil. 2:11).

C. Exhortation to earnest endeavor (Philippians 2:12-18).

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed...” (Phil. 2:12): This is the secret of all the joy in this epistle. God requires obedience. “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him...” (Heb. 5:9). The Philippians obeyed the gospel Paul preached to them. They lived in obedience to it in his absence. It is a mark of HIGHER LOYALTY to be obedient in the preacher’s absence, than in his presence.

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“WORK out your own salvation with fear and trembling”: “With reverence and trepidation cultivate your own salvation.” COMPLY with the conditions on which God has promised to save us. Live in accordance with God’s word. Do it with Godly fear. TREMBLE lest you fail to UNDERSTAND and DO GOD’S WILL (Isa. 66:2). The Holy Spirit says, “SAVE YOURSELVES...” (Acts. 2:40) and “Work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:12). Unless MAN BELIEVES and OBEYS the gospel he cannot be saved!

“For it is God which worketh in you...” (Phil. 2:13): When we work, it is God working in us. The impulses and desires that lead to action are ascribed to God. God works in the converted person by His Word and Spirit. It does not destroy our free will, for we may “QUENCH... the Spirit” (I Thess. 5:19)!

Paul exhorts the Philippians as if he were an Armenian in addressing them, He PRAYS as if he were a Calvinist in addressing God and feels no inconsistency in the two attitudes. Paul makes no attempt to reconcile divine sovereignty and human free agency, but boldly proclaim both!

“Do all things without murmurings and disputing.” (Phil. 2:14) “Do it all without grumbling and objections.” “Murmuring” was a continual and serious defect in the conduct of Israel during the wilderness journey. Among the people of God some “GRUMBLE THE WHOLE WEEK THROUGH,” every week! Paul had “learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11). Even in prison Paul could write this epistle of joy. Let us seek to follow his example.

“Disputing.” “Objections” or “questionings” refer to skeptical doubts and criticisms that result in distrust of God and in rebellion against His will. These are too often expressed in open “disputes.” He wishes to guard his readers against it.

“That ye may be blameless and harmless...” (Phil. 2:15) The word “be” or “become” implies a process of development. It is part of that “salvation” which they are to “work out.” They are to become “blameless and innocent.” They are to give the world no ground for criticism. Men are sure to find fault. However, the CONDUCT of the Christian should be free from imperfection in the judgment of God as well as in the judgment of conscience and of their fellow men. Such is the HIGH IDEAL Paul places before his readers.

“Harmless.” The Greek implies that which is “unmixed,” “unadulterated,” or “unalloyed.” Christians are to be “unblemished in reputation and in reality.”

“Sons of God... shine as lights in the world.” “God’s faultless children” are those who have experienced a new birth through faith in Christ. They have been “begotten of God,” “born of God,” They are partakers of His nature. As such they reveal themselves to men. They are to appear “without rebuke” or “without blemish” or “faultless” in the midst of “a crooked and perverse nation” or world.

The last phrase is quoted from Deut. 32:5. Ancient Israel is described as forgetful of the God who as a father had brought the nation into being and claimed it as His own first-born son among the peoples of the world. Because of their forgetfulness and disobedience they had become “perverse and crooked,” By way of contrast the Philippian Christians were the true “sons of God.” They were accomplishing their mission of living consistent, obedient lives that made them to be seen.

“As lights in the world.” As luminaries like the heavenly bodies. Christians are “the LIGHT of the world” (Matt. 5:14) as they REFLECT THE LIGHT FROM CHRIST (John 1:4; 8:12). The place for light is the darkness where it is needed.

“Holding forth the work of life...” (Phil. 2:16): Always preaching Christ in word, in life, and in deed. That is the work of the Christian. Paul is eager that those among whom he has labored may so live that he may be proud of them and rejoice in them on the day when Christ returns. That day will be for the Christian worker the day of reward and recompense. Work will be reviewed and prizes given. Paul is not willing that his effort and sacrifice have been in vain among them.

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice...” (Phil. 2:17) “In fact, even if my lifeblood must be poured out for a sacrifice to nurture your faith, I am glad of it and am glad together with you all. Equally so will you be glad and shall share happiness with me” (verse 18).

“If I be offered”: Literally, “I am poured out as a drink-offering.” The term “sacrifice” or “service” indicates a “priestly ministration.” Thus the meaning of Paul’s words may be more fully expressed, “If my blood is poured out as a libation upon the sacrifice and the priestly service which consists in your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.”

Paul was FACE TO FACE WITH DEATH. A man on trial for his life at the judgment seat of Nero was facing a genuine danger. Note the old hero’s courage. He was absolutely unafraid. Paul was willing either TO DIE, or to LIVE! He had been urging his readers to humble obedience and sub-mission to God’s will. His own case is an admirable example. He has the “mind of Christ.” He is READY FOR SERVICE or SACRIFICE, whichever may lie in the way of God’s choosing. He bids them “rejoice with me” in the prospect of death, if thereby Christ may be glorified (verse 18).

II. Companions of Paul in Rome (Philippians 2:19-30)

A. The mission of Timothy (Philippians 2:19-24).

“But I trust in the lord Jesus...” (Phil. 2:19) Paul’s “hope” is “in the Lord Jesus,” for all his plans and purposes center in Christ. He lives in Christ. Truthfully he can say “For to me to LIVE IS CHRIST” (Phil. 1:21). Thus the apostle’s “hope” of sending “Timotheus” (Timothy) “Honoring God” is to be fulfilled ONLY IF CHRIST PERMITS. Timothy was the companion of Paul at Rome, his “son” in the gospel, and fellow-laborer. “That I also maybe of good comfort.” When he returns from Philippi and “cheers me by news from you!” “For I have no man likeminded...” (Phil. 2:20) There is no other messenger whom Paul can send who is competent and willing to render this service.

“For all seek their own...” (Phil. 2:21) “The whole of them.” Surely Luke was away from Rome at this juncture. Probably many persons in Rome were willing to go on such a mission, but they were not able to go. Others were able to go but not qualified to go. Of those free to go and competent for the service, Timothy was the only one who was willing to undertake the task. He would “care truly” for their spiritual welfare. No other man was “likeminded.”

“But ye know the proof of him...” (Phil. 2:22): You have seen Timothy and know him. Timothy had visited Philippi before this (Acts 16:13; 19:22; 20:3f; II Cor. 2:9; 13:3). The Philippians were fully acquainted with his sterling worth and character. By experience they knew his loyalty and love.

“He hath served with me...” Timothy’s character is revealed in his devoted service and support of Paul. He “slaved in service with me!” Paul raises Timothy to the position of an EQUAL, a fellow laborer, and a fellow messenger. This united service was “in furtherance of the gospel.”

“Him... I hope to send... so soon as I shall see how it will go with me” (Phil. 2:23) Paul expects to send Timothy “shortly” to Philippi. He will wait until he learns the result of his own trial before Nero. Who can predict the verdict of Nero? Calmly Paul awaits the decision. He waits in an attitude of hope: “I have confidence in the Lord that soon I too shall come” (verse 24). If release comes, it will come “in the Lord.” If Paul cannot visit Philippi he will start to a “land that is fairer than day” – heaven!

B. The return of Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-30).

“Yet I... send to you Epaphroditus...” (Phil. 2:25) Paul had a second companion in Rome whose presence cheered the long hours of his Roman imprisonment. Epaphroditus means “lovely,” and is pronounced ‘e-paf-ra-di-tus.’ This faithful messenger of the church at Philippi had brought their gift to Paul.

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He was “my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier” to Paul. He comforted Paul by his companionship, assisted him in preaching, and ministered to his bodily wants. He had slaved himself sick and “nearly died” for the gospel (verses 26-27).

“But God had mercy on him” (verse 27b): “But God took pity on him, and not only on him but on me as well, so that I might not experience one grief after another.”

“I sent him... receive him” (Phil. 2:28-29): The recovery of Epaphroditus, his longing for Philippi, and the yearning of his friends have led Paul to make the sacrifice and send Epaphroditus as the bearer of this epistle. In view of such love, they were to “receive him,” royally welcome him.

“Because... he was night unto death” (Phil. 2:30) Epaphroditus risked his life to “make up for the service you could not render me.” What reception did Philippi give him? Is it necessary to ask?

QUESTIONS

1. Who illustrated “The Greatest Social Stoop in the World”, and how does it compare to Phil. 2:8?
2. Upon what four things did Paul want the Philippians to think (Phil. 2:1)?
3. In what ways can one’s cup of joy be fulfilled (Phil. 2:2)?
4. What should be “done through partisanship and pomposity”(Phil. 2:3)?
5. Every man was to “look” about the things of whom (Phil. 4:4)?
6. What “mind” was to “be” in the Philippians (Phil. 2:5; Acts 10:38; I Pet. 2:21f)?
7. In what “form” was Christ before His incarnation (Phil. 2:6; John 1:1-5; Heb. 1:1-3)?
8. What did Jesus give up for “our sake” (II Cor. 8:9)? What claim did Jesus make before men (John 5:18; 17:5; see Col. 1:15, 16; Luke 2:47)?
9. How did Christ show His humility (Phil. 2:7)? Did Christ “make him-self of no reputation” (“empty himself”) to the degree of laying aside His essential deity, or merely the appearance of deity (Phil. 2:6-8; John 1:1, 14, 18, 29, 34; 5:18; 6:69; 10:30-33, 38)?
10. By what act did God “highly exalt” Christ after He had reached the bottom rung of the ladder (Phil. 2:9; Rom. 1:4)? Where did Stephen “see” the Lord Jesus (Acts 7:55)? Who is now the Mediator “between” God and man (I Tim. 2:5)?
11. What is the name that “is above every name” (Phil. 2:9-10)?
12. Will there be any infidels or atheists in hell (Phil. 2:10-11)? Whether saved or unsaved, how many are going to be compelled to acknowledge or “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”?
13. What does the Bible mean by “Work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:12; Heb. 5:9; Acts 2:40)? How is that which is “well pleasing” to God produced in us (Heb. 13:20, 21; see I Thess. 5:19)?
14. What two things seriously hurt the cause of Christ (Phil. 2:14-15)? What is our primary business as representative of the Light of the world?
15. What are Christians “holding forth” before the world (Phil. 2:16; Deut. 32:5; Matt. 5:14; John 1:4; 8:12)?
16. Why would Paul “rejoice” to be a martyr for Christ (Phil. 2:17-18)?
17. What was Paul’s opinion of Timothy (Phil. 2:20-24)? In contrast, what was Paul’s opinion of some other Christian workers (Phil. 2:21)?
18. Who was Paul sending as a messenger to Philippi (Phil. 2:25)? Why had not Epaphroditus left earlier (Phil. 2:26, 27)?
19. How were the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:29-30)?
20. What was Paul’s “hope” even in prison (Phil. 2:24)?