

**STUDIES IN THE
PRISON EPISTLES
OF PAUL**

Dr. Carson K. Fremont

THE PRISON EPISTLES

BACKGROUND OF THE WRITING OF THESE EPISTLES

A. THE VISION FOR ROME AND WESTERN EUROPE

- 1. In 56 A.D., while still in Ephesus at the end of his third missionary journey, Paul wrote to the believers in Rome.**
 - a. Paul had never been to Rome, but had known some of the believers from there including Priscila and Aquila who had returned to Rome from Asia and now had a church meeting in their home. SEE: Romans 16:1-5.**
 - b. In Romans 16, Paul greets many of the workers and believers in Rome. This shows that he was well acquainted with them. SEE: Romans 16:6-16.**
- 2. Though he could not have known at this time how God would bring this to pass, Paul expressed a vision for reaching Rome with the preaching of the Gospel and reaching beyond Rome as far as Spain. SEE: Romans 15:18-24**
 - a. From the beginning, Paul had had a burden not to preach where others had labored. He believed that it was God's will that he reach new areas of great need with the Gospel.**
 - b. Though there were many believers in Rome, perhaps having been converted through the ministry of Paul in eastern Europe and Asia, it seems clear that none of the other apostles and church leaders had ever been in that city for ministry.**

B. THE IMPRISONMENTS OF PAUL IN PALESTINE.

- 1. When Paul arrived back in Jerusalem in 56 A.D., almost immediately he was accused by the Jews (SEE: Acts 21:27-30) who stirred the mob against him and sought to kill him. Then he was rescued by the Romans (SEE: Acts 21:31-39). After he was**

- permitted to speak to the crowd and a plot was made to kill him (SEE: Acts, chapters 22, 23), he was finally taken by the Romans to Caesarea where he was imprisoned for a period of two years.
- a. During the time he was in Caesarea, he was questioned several times by high Roman authorities such as Governor Felix, Festus and Agrippa (SEE: Acts, chapters 24-26). To them he gave testimony concerning his background, his conversion to Christ and his stand as a believer in Christ
 - b. He was also accused by the Jewish leaders who had come down from Jerusalem.
2. When Festus was about to send him back to Jerusalem where his life would be in danger, Paul as a Roman citizen appealed to be sent to appear before the Emperor Caesar. SEE: Acts 25:9-12. This was his right under Roman law.
 3. In 58 A.D., Paul was sent to Rome as a prisoner, but was treated very well on the way by the commander over him. After a long journey, they arrived in Italy and then went on to Rome. SEE: Acts 27:1-28:15.

C. THE IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL IN ROME.

1. According to Acts 28:16-31. Paul spent the first two years (28:30) in a hired house where he was permitted to meet freely with both the Jewish leaders in Rome and with others. He used that time to preach and exhort all who came to see him. The reactions of the Jews to the message he preached were mixed with no recorded spiritual results.
2. Acts does not record this, but, after two years in a hired house, with some freedom to see others, he was put into the Roman prison (60 A.D.) where he remained until his release in late 61 or early 62 A.D. Paul mentions in each of the Prison Epistles his BONDS/CHAINS of suffering. SEE: Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Philippians 1:12, 13; Colossians 1:24; 4:18; Philemon, vs. 1. In Philippians, chapter 4, he speaks of contentment in adverse circumstances, including “affliction.” SEE: chapter 4, vs. 11-14

- 3. In the last year of this time in the Roman prison, (61A.D.) Paul was inspired to write the four PRISON EPISTLES. He wrote to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians and to Philemon. Of the cities mentioned, Colossae was the only city where Paul had not personally ministered and established a church. His evangelist Epaphras had probably been the one to evangelize there.**

D. THE POST-IMPRISONMENT PERIOD

- 1. In early 62 A.D., Paul was released from this first imprisonment in the Roman prison and was free to travel and evangelize for several years. We believe that it was 65 A.D. before he was finally seized by the Romans under the persecution carried on by Nero. He began his second imprisonment in a prison in Rome, and was finally beheaded there in early 66 A.D.**
- 2. During this time of freedom, some believe that it is possible that he did fulfill his wish to go as far as Spain (Romans 15:24) with the Gospel, though his ministry there would not have been very long due to the limited time he had of freedom. There is also no historical record of any work that he might have done there.**
- 3. We do know for sure that he returned again to Asia to visit the churches there. He mentions in II Timothy 4:13 that he had left his cloak and some writings at Troas and that Timothy was to bring those when he came to visit Paul. He had also promised Philemon that he would come and stay with him, so his journeys must have taken him to the area around Colossae as well.**
- 4. While he was free he wrote two more epistles, I Timothy and Titus. II Timothy was written during his final imprisonment in Rome just before his death.**
- 5. We note that when he finished the Epistle to the Philippians, at the end of his first imprisonment in Rome, his tone was very positive and joyous, but when he wrote II Timothy in late 65 A.D., just before his death, he seemed discouraged. He was facing death, some of his associates had forsaken him and he was writing to give final instructions and to bid farewell to his co-workers and others.**

THE STUDY OF THE PRISON EPISTLES

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

A. THE NATURE OF THE EPHESIAN SITUATION

- 1. Ephesus was both the chief port and capital of the Province of Asia. In New Testament times it was famous as a political, commercial and religious center. It was best known for the Temple of Diana, one of most famous wonders of the ancient world. The followers of Diana, especially those who made silver statues of Diana and replicas of her temple, would give Paul some of the strongest opposition when he would seek to reach the citizens for Christ.**
- 2. Both the City of Ephesus and the province attracted a large number of the Jews of the Dispersion. These were Jews whose ancestors had been taken captive by the invaders but who never returned to the Holy Land when they were given the opportunity by their captors. These Jews were very zealous about religious and racial differences. They would also give Paul some of his strongest opposition in his ministries in Ephesus.**
- 3. It was also an important place for ministry and seemed to have been one of Paul's main objectives in evangelizing in Asia. It is possible that Paul, had he not been called to go into Macedonia first (SEE: Acts 16:6-13), might even have gone there early in his second missionary journey. It is possible that the Apostle John might also have gone there late in his ministry, and might even have written some of his epistles from there.**
- 4. In Acts 20:17-38, it seems that there were numbers of churches established in the area of Ephesus. Paul called their pastors to**

see him at Miletus so that he could give them final instructions and encouragement before he returned to Jerusalem.

B. THE FOUNDING OF THE EPHESIAN CHURCH

- 1. On Paul's second missionary journey, he had wanted to continue and expand his ministry in Asia, but the Holy Spirit brought him the "Macedonian Vision" and sent him over into Eastern Europe instead. SEE: Acts 16:6-13. It would be more than two years before he would return to Asia again.**
- 2. After founding works in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth, Paul at last returned to Asia by way of Ephesus. He was only there for a very short time (one or two weeks?) because he was on his way to Antioch of Syria, but he promised them that he would return.**
- 3. On this brief visit to Ephesus, Paul was accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla who had worked with him in Corinth. After Paul left for Palestine, this couple stayed in Ephesus and ministered to Apollos who was a follower of John the Baptist and needed some vital teaching concerning the Person and Work of Christ. Apollos then left for Corinth to continue the ministry that Paul had begun in that city. SEE: Acts 18:24-28**
- 4. On his third missionary journey, Ephesus was Paul's main burden and objective, and he went there after a very brief stay in Galatia. He was to stay there for a long period of nearly three years.**
 - a. His first converts were twelve followers of John the Baptist, who, like Apollos, knew only the preparation that John had given for the coming of the Lord but who had not really known everything about His actual coming and completed work. SEE: Acts 19:1-7.**
 - b. For the next three months, Paul ministered in the local synagogue. When severe opposition developed there from the Jewish leaders, Paul withdrew from the synagogue, taking the converts with him and conducting his meetings with them in a private place.**

- c. For two years, he ministered in the “school of Tyrannus” who was probably one of his earliest converts there. This work was so effective that “all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” SEE: Acts 19:10.**
- d. Some believe that, during this period of time, all of the seven churches dealt with in Revelations, chapters 2 and 3 (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea) were founded either by Paul or by his associates.**
- e. We note that Paul also performed many miracles while in Ephesus. His power to perform miracles is only mentioned several times in Acts. As a result of these miracles, many Jews and Greeks and followers of the false religions were saved. SEE: Acts 19:20.**
- f. Paul had planned to leave Ephesus to return to Macedonia and Achaia, but stayed instead in Asia “for a season.” SEE: Acts 19:21, 22.**
- g. At this time, strong opposition came from the pagan silversmiths who were followers of the goddess Diana. They were led by Demetrius who provoked a mob to seize Paul’s companions.**
- h. After this trouble ended, Paul went to Macedonia. On his return, he met the Ephesian elders at Miletus (SEE: Acts 20:17-38) and then left for Jerusalem.**

C. THE NATURE OF THE EPHESIAN CHURCH

- 1. In reviewing the founding of the church and then studying the Epistle to the Ephesians itself, it seems clear that, at this time, this church was a rather spiritual church.**
 - a. It seemed to have none of the multiple problems of the Corinthian Church, for instance. Nor did it have any of the serious doctrinal problems of the Galatian Church.**

- b. It was not until 95 A.D., when John wrote the Book of Revelation, that it stopped “standing firm” and its spiritual condition began to decline. They had “left their first love.” SEE: Rev. 2:1-7.
2. We know that it became a center for reaching the cities of that area with the Gospel. Paul himself used it as a base for reaching places like Colossae, Laodicea and Hieropolis, as he sent one or more of his coworkers to evangelize in those places. It was from Ephesus that he wrote his two epistles to the Corinthians.
 3. The main needs in the Ephesian church (churches?) were related to building them up in the faith and instructing them in some of the practical problems of the Christian life. Whether these needs were related to their relationships with the Lord Himself (SEE: Ephesians 1:3-14-3:21), with each other (SEE: Ephesians (Ephesians 4:1-6:9) or to the dangers of outside forces (SEE: Ephesians 6:10-20), this epistle lacks any strong critical tone as though they were rebellious and living apart from God’s will for them.

D. THE PURPOSES AND THEMES OF EPHESIANS

1. The first main purpose and theme of this epistle is to help them to understand God’s total plan for the salvation of mankind.
 - a. This salvation is based upon the pouring out of God’s love and grace upon mankind through the complete work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The salvation is entirely based upon the Lord, and all that we receive by way of blessing from God is through the Lord. SEE: Ephesians, chapter 1.
 - b. This salvation is offered to those who, in themselves, are hopelessly lost in sin as members of Satan’s family and subject to the punishment of God in themselves. It is through the Grace of the Lord that this salvation is offered to mankind and is entirely apart from any works or merit of our own. SEE: Ephesians 2:1-10. If anyone were to seek relationship and acceptance with God in any other way, he would never find it.

- c. **This salvation is offered equally to Jews and Gentiles alike and, once they have partaken of this salvation, they are spiritually one in Christ and equal in every way before God. SEE: Ephesians 2:11-3:12.**
- 2. **The second main purpose and theme of this epistle is to teach concerning their position and responsibilities in the spiritual body of Christ once they have come into the salvation of the Lord. This section begins with the second prayer of the epistle in Ephesians 3:14-19-21, and ends with Ephesians 6:9. It will not only include their position and responsibilities with others in the church/Christian realm, but also in every other relationship.**
- 3. **The third main purpose and theme of this epistle is to prepare them for the great spiritual battles and stand for the faith that is required of them in their relationship with the Lord. SEE: Ephesians 6:10-20. They must not only recognize that there will be spiritual battles to fight once they have come into saving relationship with the Lord, but they must also be spiritually EQUIPPED to fight those battles as they rely on the spiritual armor that is provided for them by God in their salvation.**

E. THE OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

- I. INTRODUCTION** **1:1, 2**
- II. THE TRUE SALVATION OF GOD** **1:3-6:20**
 - A. THE FOUNDATIONS OF TRUE SALVATION** **1:3-3:13**
 - 1. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST AS THE ONLY BASIS FOR TRUE SALVATION** **1:3-14**
 - 2. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCING OF TRUE SALVATION** **1:15-23**
 - 3. THE BASIS AND REQUIREMENTS OF TRUE SALVATION** **2:1-10**

4. THE UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF TRUE SALVATION	2:11-22
5. THE PERFECT FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PLAN IN TRUE SALVATION	3:1-13
B. THE SPIRITUAL APPLICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUE SALVATION	3:14-6:20
1. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE PROOF IN THEM OF THE PRESENCE OF TRUE SALVATION.	3:14-21
2. THE OUTWORKINGS OF TRUE SALVATION IN THE HARMONY OF CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS	4:1-16
3. THE CHANGES IN A BELIEVER'S LIFE IN TRUE SALVATION	4:17-31
4. THE EFFECT OF THESE CHANGES ON EVERY KIND OF RELATIONSHIPS IN TRUE SALVATION	4:32-6:9
5. THE SPIRITUAL BATTLES TO BE FOUGHT IN TRUE SALVATION	6:10-20
IV. CONCLUSION	6:21-24

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF EPHESIANS

I. INTRODUCTION	1:1, 2
A. As he opens this epistle, Paul asserts his APOSTLESHIP and the authority of God that it carries with it.	1:1a
1. In a number of his other epistles, he had also included this in his introductions. Only in Philippians, I and II Thessalonians and Philemon is this not used. Even in I and II Timothy and Titus, epistles written to his own coworkers, he continued to assert this.	

- 2. The position of an apostle was a very limited position given in that day only to those who were especially chosen by the Lord. The position carried with it the authority not only to speak teachings that came directly from God himself, but also to command obedience to those teachings. Paul had been chosen to occupy that position though he was not one of the original followers of the Lord.**
 - 3. Because he gives strong teaching in all of his epistles, some had questioned both his position before God and his right to speak in such strong and authoritative ways to those to whom he is writing. In the case of the Corinthians, they had difficulty accepting the fact that he had the same authority as any of the original followers of the Lord. It was therefore necessary for him not only to assert his right to speak with the authority of God Himself behind all he was saying, but also to be able to demand that they accept and follow his teachings.**
 - 4. We note that most of his epistles deal with strong doctrinal matters. SEE: Romans, Ephesians and Colossians. Some of those doctrines would be ones that some were doubting or denying. It would be necessary, therefore, to have the authority of God supporting the proclamation of them as being absolutely true and unchangeable.**
 - 5. Others were dealing with matters of sin and disobedience to God in personal and church life (SEE: I and II Corinthians), and these teachings would also require the support of the authority of God in order for these corrective teachings to be accepted and followed.**
 - 6. In the cases of Timothy and Titus, who were from the second generation of Christian leaders, though they were true and trusted followers of the Lord, they would need to be able to teach others on the basis of the fact that the teachings Paul had given them carried with them the full authority of God. Otherwise, many would not believe their teachings and adhere to them.**
- B. THE ADDRESSEES are the faithful Christians of Ephesus. From all that we learn in the Book of Acts and in this epistle, there were no great problems of sin or rebellion among these Christians. As previously noted, it would not be until late in the century that their**

love and devotion to the Lord would change and they would need to be rebuked for this change. SEE: Revelation 2:4, 5. However, from the teachings of the epistle, at this time they did seem to need further instruction in some of the basic truths of the faith. These included teachings on salvation itself and the Christian life. 1:1b

- C. He uses THE BLESSING that is common to many of his epistles, where he wishes that GRACE (the sustaining/strengthening grace of the Lord rather than His saving grace) and PEACE (the daily peace of heart from God to keep them from worries and fears rather than peace with God in salvation) might be theirs from the Father and the Son. SEE: Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Philippians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1; etc. 1:2

II. THE TRUE SALVATION OF GOD. 1:3-6:20

A. THE FOUNDATIONS OF TRUE SALVATION 1:3-3:13

1. The Person and Work of Christ as the Only Foundation For True Salvation 1:3-14
 - a. The Person and Work of Christ is presented in terms of the BLESSING that God has bestowed on us. The purpose of this passage is to show that, because of the Person and Work of Christ, He is absolutely able to fully bring about our salvation and that this is due to the pouring out of the blessing of God on our behalf.
 - b. He begins in vs. 3 by introducing the subject of “blessing” and points out that this blessing can only be bestowed by the Father and partaken of “IN CHRIST”. If it does not come through Him, then there is no spiritual blessing that God can bestow on us. His Person and Work, therefore, are a vital part of any blessing of salvation that we receive from God. 1:3
 - c. A number of DIFFERENT ASPECTS of the Person and Work of Christ are given that make this pouring out of His blessing on us possible. 1:4-14

- 1) We were “chosen IN HIM before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” 1:4a, b
- a) The phrase “CHOSEN”, together with the following phrase “PREDESTINED,” has been the foundations of the belief by many that Christ did not die for the sins of the whole world (SEE: John 3:16a; Mark 16:15, 16; I John 4:14) but ONLY for those who were chosen by God to receive salvation to the EXCLUSION of all others in the world.
- b) Some would even go so far as to teach that those who are chosen have no real personal responsibility in coming to the Lord for salvation. They are not only incapable of turning away/rejecting the Lord (This is contrary to Hebrews 2:1; 3:12, 13; 6:6), but these teachers interpret Ephesians 2:8, 9 to teach that God also gives them the very faith to believe and that they merely partake.
- c) However, we teach that God’s salvation is open to all who are reached with the Gospel and that they themselves must make the decision whether to accept or reject God’s salvation offered to them by the GRACE of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We further point out that even those who are not actually reached by the full proclamation of the Gospel have rejected the revelation God has given of Himself and of their own sinful condition before Him (SEE: Romans 1:18-20; 21-25; 2:14, 15). As sinful human beings, they are fully deserving of the punishment that God will give them. This approach does not answer every question, but it seems more in agreement with the full teaching of the Scriptures concerning salvation.
- d) This latter approach emphasizes that the choosing and the predestinating work of God is directed also toward the results of the salvation that He has given us, “that we should be holy and without blame before Him” and enjoy “the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” This means that it is not just our eternal salvation that God is emphasizing, but also what we are before Him and the world after we are saved.

- 2) In love He “predestined us unto the adoption of children BY JESUS CHRIST to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will.” 1:4c-5
- a) As noted above, despite our unworthiness to have any relationship with Him at all, God made possible both our salvation and all the results and benefits that would accompany it. These could come through Christ alone and could not be gained by any other means.
 - b) Knowing in eternity concerning the fall of man and the hopeless lost condition he would experience, God in love prepared this salvation plan to deliver from sin those who would believe through the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c) Even before the coming of the Lord into the world, God announced this salvation plan to the world through the Jewish nation, and revealed the foundations of this plan for mankind through the LAW, that showed them their sinful condition before Him, and the SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM, that pointed to the one offering for sin of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. SEE: John 1:29; Hebrews 9:14, 28..
- 3) This is “to the praise of the glory of His GRACE wherein He hath made us accepted IN THE BELOVED.” 1:6
- a) Before we were saved, as hopeless lost sinners, we were not acceptable to God for any relationship with Him or any favor or blessing from Him. We had no rights before Him or any means, in ourselves, of solving our sin problem. To the contrary, we were enemies of His (SEE: Romans 5:1) and subject to His final judgment and condemnation.
 - b) “IN THE BELOVED” (CHRIST), we are ACCEPTED by God and brought into that eternal relationship with Him. If we do not approach God in/through Him, such acceptance can never come to us from God. SEE: John 14:6; Acts 4:12.
 - c) This acceptance through Christ is the result of God’s GRACE (completely undeserved/unmerited/unearned favor) poured out

**to us in the sending of His Son to die on the Cross for our sins,
and in the offering of salvation through Christ to us.**

- 4) “IN WHOM we have redemption through HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins.” 1:7a**
- a) The sacrificial death of Christ, in which He not only died for us but He also shed/poured out His BLOOD for us, is the heart of the ministry of the Son on our behalf and the means by which God makes our salvation possible.**
 - b) We note the close relationship between the millions of the Old Testament sacrifices offered by the Jews, in which the blood of the sacrificed animals was poured out on the altar, and the sacrifice and the shedding of the blood of Christ. Contrary to the beliefs of some, the Old Testament sacrifices did not themselves bring cleansing from sin. To the contrary, they were only a PICTURE of the coming sacrifice of the Lord that would finally make possible the complete forgiveness and cleansing from sin in the hearts of those who would trust Him as their Savior. SEE: John 1:29.**
 - c) We also note that in the Old Testament, the killing/death of the animal alone was not the sacrifice that God wanted them to offer. The BLOOD of the animal had to be poured out in that death of the animal. SEE: Leviticus 17:11. Likewise, in the crucifixion of the Lord, it was not just His death on the Cross, but it was the accompanying pouring out of His blood which was necessary in that death. SEE: I John 1:7.**
- 5) This is “according to the riches of His GRACE wherein He hath abounded toward us (lavished on us).” 1:7b, 8a**
- a) God has not only extended His GRACE and love to us, but He has lavished it/poured it out in great quantities on us so that it would be sufficient to save completely all those who would trust the Lord and deal with all of the sins they have ever committed, no matter how great those sins might be. No one would ever need to wonder or doubt if they have gone “too far” for Christ to save them.**

- b) **By the very definition of the phrase GRACE, our complete unworthiness to have any forgiveness of our sins or to have any relationship with Him did not stop Him from this pouring out of His Grace. The greater our need, the more Grace is poured out on us. SEE: Romans 5:20.**
- 6) **“In all wisdom and prudence He made known the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.”**
1:8b, 9
- a) **The phrase “MYSTERY” is used in a number of different passages. SEE: Ephesians 3:3, 4, 9; Colossians 1:27, 28; 2:2, 3. In Ephesians, it especially refers to the bringing together of the Jews and Gentiles into a common salvation and standing in the Body of Christ. In Colossians, it emphasizes the finished work of Christ in salvation that made possible the salvation of all mankind and His presence in us. SEE: Colossians 1:27.**
- b) **Although the salvation of the Gentiles was taught in the Old Testament, the major emphasis of the Old Testament teaching was still on the Jews and their unique relationship. Some things about the full plan of God for the world were therefore a “mystery” to the Old Testament Jews. In the New Testament, however, the full plan of God is revealed for all to know.**
- c) **As we will see when we study Ephesians 2:11-3:13, the Gentiles are just as fully a part of God’s salvation as the Jews, and have all the rights and privileges of that salvation. Jews and Gentiles are not only ONE in the Lord, but they are to share together in the local church with them fully accepting one another.**
- d) **This aspect of the “mystery” would be most difficult for the Jews to accept, for they had historically always been the enemies of the Gentiles. They would either be tempted to reject altogether any relationship with them in Christ OR would be tempted to look down on them in church relationships, to be critical of them and to consider them as inferior to themselves. SEE: Acts, chapter 15; Romans 14:1-15:8; I Corinthians, chapters 8-10.**

- 7) **“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in ONE all things IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.”** 1:10a, b
- a) **Rather than speaking of the spiritual relationships which all Christians have NOW with one another, both Jews and Gentiles, this gathering together seems to refer to the END TIMES, following the Second Coming of the Lord.**
- b) **We know from the Book of Revelation, that His Second Coming will bring a series of events that will begin with the resurrection of the saved dead of all nations and times (SEE: I Corinthians, chapter 15; I Thessalonians 4:13-17), and will include His 1000 year reign over the whole earth and the eternal worship of Him that will take place in heaven. SEE: Revelation, chapter 5.**
- c) **This is made possible by His Person, as the Divine Son of God, and His work on our behalf in sacrificing Himself for our salvation and then bringing us to Himself.**
- 8) **“IN WHOM also we have obtained an INHERITANCE, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.”** 1:10c, 11
- a) **The “inheritance” referred to here, in the light of the teaching of vs. 12, seems to refer to our salvation itself, and the eternal relationship and righteous standing before God that this salvation has brought into our lives.**
- b) **When seen in the light of vs. 12, it also seems to refer to the privilege that God has given us, in this saving relationship we have with God through Christ, of living in this world representing and glorifying the Lord as He reveals Himself through our lives. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 1:20, 21.**
- 9) **“That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted IN CHRIST.”** 1:12

- a) **God’s purpose in saving us is not only to deliver us from our sins and to give us an eternal relationship with Him, but also to fashion and mold us so that we will bring glory to Him as we live in the world. SEE: Romans 8:28, 29.**
 - b) **Failure to understand this truth is the error that is dealt with in such passages as Romans 6:1-7:6 and Galatians 5:1-16-26. In those passages, some had felt that the final end of God’s plan for them was to simply save them from their sins rather than having their salvation lead them into God’s full purposes for them as they would live in the world following their salvation. That error was strongly dealt with as God gave them a call to separation from the world of sin to righteous living before God and man.**
- 10) “IN WHOM ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation.” 1:13a**
- a) **The decision they made when they came into saving relationship with God was centered on the Lord Himself. It was not enough to simply believe in God. Their faith had to be centered on the Lord and His saving work on their behalf as their only means of having such a saving relationship with God.**
 - b) **This decision came when they heard the Truth from the Word of God itself and understood and accepted all of the facts of the Gospel. SEE: Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 15:1-10. This understanding then led them to make a clear decision to put their faith in Him alone for salvation.**
- 11) “IN WHOM also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (pledge) of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” 1:13b, 14**
- a) **The work of the Holy Spirit in salvation is a vital truth of God’s message of salvation.**
 - b) **Even before we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit convicts of our sin and our need of a**

Savior. SEE: John 16:7-11. He then helps DRAW us to the Lord and saving faith in Him. SEE: John 6:44. He then REGENERATES us so that we are “new creations” in Him. SEE: John 3:3-7; II Corinthians 5:17.

- c) In this passage, he speaks of the fact that, once we have put our trust in the Lord as our Savior from sin, the Holy Spirit then SEALS us in our salvation eternally so that we will never lose it. SEE: John 6:37, 40; 10:28-30.**
- d) He then comes to indwell us, and His indwelling and sealing is God’s testament in our lives that we are saved and will always have this saving relationship with Him and will participate in all of God’s eternal plans for those who belong to Him.**

2. Paul’s Prayer For Their Full Understanding and Experiencing of True Salvation.

1:15-23

- a. There are marked differences between the two prayers (1:15-23 and 3:14-21) recorded in Ephesians. The contents and emphasis of both of these prayers is related to the CONTEXT in which they appear.**
 - 1) The first prayer, 1:15-23, introduces the rest of the DOCTRINAL section of this epistle, and is related to the subject of SALVATION, its means and applications. Although he is addressing this epistle to Christians in the Church of Ephesus, he is making sure that they really understand the full truth of the salvation they have experienced and can use it with others.**
 - 2) The second prayer, 3:14-21, introduces the PRACTICAL section of this epistle, where the emphasis is not upon HOW to be saved but rather is upon the RESULTS and RESPONSIBILITIES of salvation in the lives of those who have truly experienced it. The contents of the prayer will therefore fit that context.**
- b. The Burden and Contents of the Prayer, 1:15-23.**

1) The Basis and Passion of Paul's Prayer For Them Vs. 15-18a

- a) Paul, in prison in Rome, has received encouraging reports about their strong faith in the Lord Jesus, and their love for others in the body of believers. This good report stirs in him an ongoing great love and burden for them. SEE: Romans 1:8. 9; Philippians 1:4-8; I Thessalonians 1:2-4; II Thessalonians 1:3, 4. Vs. 15**
- b) While being grateful for this good report, it has now emboldened him to write to them about their further need for the fullest possible understanding of all that is involved in that faith, so that their faith is both sound and reaches its full potential. Their understanding may have been very elementary when they first were saved. SEE: Romans 1:11-16; 1:17-11:36. Such understanding would have given them all the basic facts they would need to be saved. Vs. 16**
- c) He is not doubting their faith and salvation, but, "in the knowledge of Him," they need this full understanding through "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" that God will give them.**
- d) This opening of "the eyes of their understanding" will both erase any doubts in their own hearts as their faith is confirmed and strengthened, and will enable them to more effectively reach out to others with the Gospel.**

2) The Contents of His Prayer For Them. 1:18b-23

a) "That ye may know what is the hope of His calling." Vs. 18b

1)) It seems that he is not only speaking of their future hope for eternal life with Him, but that he is also speaking of all they receive and can expect in their salvation as they have come into this saving relationship with Him. Therefore, this would include their hope in this life as well as in the future life.

a)) God has not only saved us from our sins and given to us eternal life, but He has also given us the FULL BENEFITS of this saving relationship with Him in our daily lives as we live in this world.

These benefits are available to all Christians if they are fully aware of them, appropriate them and are living lives that are acceptable to God for the full bestowing of these benefits.

- b)) Many fail to realize the nature and availability of these benefits and live their lives with little of the daily blessing and favor that God wants them to experience. Their lives, as they face the problems and difficulties of living in this world, are filled with worries and fears, with unresolved problems and defeat as they face the difficulties of life and the temptations of the flesh.**
 - c)) It is for this reason that many decide to wait until they are ready to die before they are even willing to trust Him for salvation. They live their whole lives without His help and blessing, but, if they are given one last opportunity by God, finally put their faith in Him at the time of death. Such decisions are called “death bed decisions.”**
- 2)) The HOPE that he refers to can also be the HOPE OF HIS COMING/BLESSED HOPE. SEE: I Corinthians 15:12-19; I Thessalonians 4:13-17; Titus 2:13.**
- a)) The promise concerning this was first given by the Lord to His followers when they were fearful and anxious about His coming death and separation from them. SEE: John 14:1-6. He had previously spoken of His coming to rule and reign (SEE: Matthew, chapter 24, 25), but had not specifically dealt with the RAPTURE, the time when His people will be caught up to meet Him in the air, preceding His coming WITH them to reign.**
 - b)) Throughout the Church Age, this same promise of the RAPTURE was repeated over and over again to Christians going through trials and persecutions for their faith. This hope was used by God to sustain them and help them live faithfully for the Lord. Some Corinthians were denying it altogether. SEE: I Corinthians 15:12, 13-19.**
 - c)) In the case of the Thessalonians, they were despairing over the burying of their loved ones, and were filled with wonder if**

these loved ones would ever again have a body and they would see them again. SEE: I Thessalonians 4:13-17.

b) **“What (are) the riches of the glory of His INHERITANCE in the saints.”** Vs. 18c

1)) **Some have interpreted this to mean that God Himself receives something when we come into relationship with Him. We are His inheritance. This could be true in the sense that, in His people, God now has those who will both honor and glorify Him, and will also completely devote their lives to serving and representing Him in the world. With His leading and power, we carry out His purposes in the world.**

2)) **Others interpret this to mean that God applies to the lives of His people all the blessings of heaven, so that His people are not just waiting for the FUTURE inheritance they will receive when they die or when the Lord comes, but they will experience the full spiritual blessings of God NOW in their lives. The experiencing of these spiritual blessings is like a “taste of heaven” itself for His people.**

c) **“What is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.”** Vs. 19a

1)) **In Romans 1:16, Paul speaks of the POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION.” We know that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to give us a NEW NATURE and bring us into relationship with God through Christ. Only God in His power could bring this to pass.**

2)) **In Romans, chapter 8 and Galatians 5:16, God speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in giving VICTORY over sin. This too is the POWER of God working in our lives, for Romans 7:14-25 indicates that the Christian who is relying on his own strength or the following of the Law to win victory lives in total defeat.**

3)) **In Galatians 5:22, 23, God speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in producing SPIRITUAL FRUIT in our lives. This is FRUIT**

that we did not have in our lives in our natural state before we were saved, but has been produced in our lives in our new relationship with Him by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

4)) In Acts 1:8, the Lord speaks of the POWER that the Holy Spirit would give them in the WITNESS/proclamation of the Gospel. They were not to begin their ministries until this power would be on them by the Holy Spirit. Without the convicting and preparing work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those whom they would seek to reach with the Gospel (SEE: John 16:7-11), His work in drawing people to the Lord (SEE: John 6:44) and the application of the Word being preached to the lives of those they were reaching (SEE: Acts 2:37) by the Holy Spirit, there would be no response even to the most fervent preaching. No matter how much training they had received from the Lord, the Truth He had shared with them or the abilities they had, nothing could be accomplished apart from the Spirit's work.

d) "Which He wrought (brought about) in Christ when-" Vs. 19b-23

*****These four verses are directly related to this empowering of our lives by the Father. This bestowing of power on us is dependent upon the work of the Father in/through the Lord Jesus Christ.**

*****Though the actual empowering of our lives comes as a result of the indwelling Holy Spirit, this bestowing of His power on us is the direct RESULT of the Person and Work of Christ.**

*****If He is not the Divine Son of God, who has accomplished all that was purposed for Him in coming into the world, and if He does not now occupy that place of exaltation and glory at the right hand of the Father in heaven after being raised from the dead, there would be no indwelling Holy Spirit in our lives and no bestowing of power from the Father.**

*****The Holy Spirit would only come after His sacrificial death on the Cross, His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven to occupy again that glorious position. SEE: John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15; Acts 1:4-8. The promise of the Lord was**

that He would send the Spirit FROM HEAVEN to indwell and use them.

1)) “He raised Him from the dead.” Vs. 20a

- a)) I Corinthians 15:12-19 discusses the vital place that the bodily resurrection of the Lord from the dead has on our salvation and future hope. If death had conquered Him and He did not rise from the dead, we would have no assurance whatsoever of our own salvation and our future resurrection from the dead. If He were only in spirit form in heaven, then that is all we would ever be even if we could go to heaven.**
- b)) Though liberals seek to deny His resurrection from the dead, historically there is irrefutable proof that this resurrection actually took place. In the Gospels, He appeared after His resurrection to many different people in many different situations. In I Corinthians 15:1-8, Paul speaks of all the witnesses to His resurrection, most of whom were still living in that day.**
- c)) It was His resurrection from the dead that gave the Apostles the willingness to suffer and be persecuted for His sake and to declare boldly His Gospel in the worst of circumstances. SEE: Acts, chapter 3-5. His resurrection also became the heart of the message they preached with none of the Jews in Jerusalem openly denying it or proving it never took place.**

2)) “And seated Him set (seated) Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.” Vs. 20b

- a)) In John 1:1-14 and Philippians 2:5-8, 9-11, it is taught that Christ previous to His coming to the earth to live and sacrifice Himself on the Cross, had occupied a place of authority and power in heaven as the Divine Son of God. He participated in every act of the Godhead in the creation of the world (SEE: John 1:1-3) and possessed the same attributes as the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is indeed the Divine Son of God.**

- b)) **He voluntarily left that position of power and authority as the Divine Son of God to come down to the earth and accomplish God's purposes in making possible the salvation of mankind. SEE: Galatians 4:4, 5; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 10:5-10**
- c)) **Philippians, chapter 2, vs. 9-11. goes ahead to teach that Christ was then restored to that same position of power and glory at the right hand of the Father that He had occupied before. This passage concludes by saying that, at the Name of Jesus, all things in heaven and earth will bow before Him and proclaim that He is Lord. SEE ALSO: Revelation, chapter 5.**
- 3)) **“And put all things under His feet.”** **Vs. 22a**
- a)) **His position as the Divine Son of God at the right hand of the Father includes His equal participation in ruling over the whole universe and everything having to do with it. This includes all the affairs of nations and people.**
- b)) **This also means that He is directly involved in everything in the lives of His people. He lives in our lives by the Spirit and our main goal in life is to represent Him and to live for His glory. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 1:20, 21.**
- c)) **Though we now pray to the Father directly, we do so in His Name. There is also one or more example in the New Testament (SEE: Stephen in Acts 7:55, 56 and 60; and Paul in Acts 9:5) of people praying directly to Him after having seen Him in glory.**
- d)) **He is also preparing for the judgment of Christians at His judgment seat following the Rapture, and is fully aware of everything good and bad in our lives. SEE: I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:9-11.**
- e)) **Following His coming down to the earth, He will rule and reign over all peoples on the earth. SEE: Matthew, chapter 25; Revelation, chapters 21, 22.**

4)) **“And gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church.”**

Vs. 22b, 23

- a)) **There are many who believe that “the Church which is His body” refers to each LOCAL church in any given place. The believers in that church belong to Him and He is their head or ruler. The problem in this view is that this interpretation seems to indicate that the Lord is head of the organization itself rather than the truly saved ones in each body of believers. In most churches of any size, there would be some unsaved people and these could hardly be connected spiritually with the Lord.**

- b)) **The more common view of this passage and its description is that it is referring to true believers of EVERY nation and tongue who together constitute the Body of Christ. This would have no reference to the Church as an organization, local or otherwise, but rather as a world wide SPIRITUAL BODY OF BELIEVERS. People of every nation and tongue would be part of this AS LONG AS they are true believers.**

3. The Basis and Requirements of True Salvation. 2:1-10

- a. **Taking the same approach that he had been inspired by God to use in Romans (SEE: Romans 1:18-3:18), Paul begins this section by emphasizing the hopeless lost condition of all of mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, and their absolute dependence upon God Himself to answer this need through his Mercy and Grace. 2:1-3**
 - 1) **The phrases he uses emphasize that lost people are in no position to help themselves in being saved and having eternal relationship with God. He begins, therefore, with the fact that God, in salvation, made alive those who were totally spiritually dead, without any life in themselves, desire after God or ability in themselves to affect or change their lost condition. 2:1**

 - 2) **They were completely devoted to and under the domination of sin, and belonged both to Satan Himself and to those who were His followers. As far as God was concerned, they were His enemies just as Satan himself is His enemy. SEE: Romans 5:1. 2:2**

- 3) **Their only purpose in life was to walk with Satan's followers under his domination. They were devoted to this purpose. 2:3a**
 - 4) **Without God's intervention, their final end, in this relationship with Satan and his followers, was to be the coming WRATH of God manifested in his final judgment and eternal punishment for all those in their condition. SEE: John 3:36b. 2:3b**
- b. He then tells of God's intervention in the lives of all of mankind in making possible their salvation. 2:4-10**
- 1) **This intervention of God is the result of His MERCY and LOVE for all mankind. Though those of mankind have no love at all, from a human standpoint, for God and are devoted to sin against Him, in His Mercy and Love, He still loves them and wants them to be saved from their sins and come into relationship with Him. SEE: John 3:16a; Romans 5:5-8. Though it carries with it the CONDITION that they must act upon His mercy and love by putting their trust in the Lord (SEE: John 3:16c; 3:36a), this Mercy and Love is still unlimited and offered to all. SEE: Romans 5:20. 2:4**
 - 2) **This Mercy and Love is made available to lost people through the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Grace of God (His unearned and undeserved favor and blessing) is poured out on mankind with the message and means of salvation. 2:5-7**
 - 3) **This Mercy and Love can only be applied to the lives of lost people as they receive salvation as a gift from God, given by His GRACE entirely apart from any works that they might do or any efforts on their part to earn it. 2:8, 9**
- a) Neither before, during or following salvation will any works of lost people qualify them to have or retain this salvation. They will be held responsible at the Judgment Seat of Christ (SEE: II Corinthians 5:9-11) for the way they have lived their Christian lives, but no one who has come into salvation will ever be judged with the lost at the Great White Throne Judgment (SEE: Revelation 20:11-15). If any works are required in gaining and**

keeping salvation itself, then GRACE is nullified and is no longer a part of their salvation.

- b) This salvation gift is accepted by FAITH. Rather than simply being mental assent to the facts of salvation, this is heart faith that completely trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and brings the lost person into a saving relationship with Him.
- 1)) As noted before, there are those who seem to teach the lost person has no personal responsibility at all in coming to the Lord by Faith. They teach that the faith itself is the gift of God.
 - 2)) However, every passage dealing with salvation emphasizes the personal responsibility of each lost person to receive the gift of God by faith/belief. In this passage, it is the salvation of God that is the gift rather than the faith by which it is appropriated.
 - 3)) It is certainly true that the Holy Spirit CONVICTS the lost person of his lost condition before God and need of salvation. SEE: John 16:8-11. He also “DRAWS” the lost person to willingness to trust the Lord. SEE: John 6:44. The final responsibility, however, still rests with that lost person to receive the gift of salvation by Faith. Without that there is no salvation.
 - 4) The final verse in this section emphasizes that, in salvation, we are entirely HIS workmanship, with no credit due to ourselves. He both made it possible and brought about our regeneration by the Holy Spirit so that we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. SEE: II Corinthians 5:17. 2:10a
 - 5) He closes this section by emphasizing that it is His will and purpose that we should live (“UNTO”) in good works or righteousness FOLLOWING that new birth. So, we are not saved BY good works, but we are to live in them AFTER we are saved.

4. The Universal Application of True Salvation 2:11-22

- a. The question he will be answering in this section has to do with whether or not this salvation applies equally to the Gentiles as well

as to the Jews. If it does, then what is their relationship together in their salvation through Christ?

b. He begins by discussing all the things that made the Gentiles different from the Jews and separated them from each other in the Old Testament before Christ finished His saving work. He does this by emphasizing the phrases “in time past”/”formerly”. 2:11, 12

- 1) They were “Gentiles in the flesh”. This standing separated them from the Old Testament chosen people of God, the Jews. Everyone who was not a Jew, no matter what their nationality or background, would be numbered among the Gentiles and would be considered to be outsiders and enemies of God’s people.**
- 2) They were “without Christ”/”separate from Christ.” In the eyes of the Jews, they would have no relationship or hope in the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, since the Old Testament mainly emphasizes the salvation of the Jews.**
- 3) They were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” They were not part of God’s chosen people and had no share in the inheritance that God had given His people in Canaan.**
- 4) They were “strangers from/to the covenants of promise.” Every promise of the Old Testament dealing with God’s salvation through the coming Messiah seemed to be directed specifically to the Jews and seemed to offer nothing to the Gentiles.**
- 5) They had “no hope and (were) without God in the world.” As pagan idol worshippers and enemies of God’s people, they seemed to be as far from God as they could possibly be, and therefore they would have no hope for future salvation from Him.**

c. Just as the intervention of God in vs. 4 (“BUT GOD”) had completely reversed the hopeless lost condition of ALL mankind (SEE: vs. 1-3), and had given everyone the possibility of salvation through the finished work of Christ, so now (“BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS”), through the “blood of Christ,” salvation has been opened just as much to the Gentiles as it has been for the Jews. 2:13-22

- 1) **This was made possible by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in the shedding of His blood as a sacrifice for the sins of ALL mankind, both Jews and Gentiles. 2:13**

- 2) **He took away the WALL that had separated Jews and Gentiles, the Law of Moses, so that they would all be saved by the same means and have the same standing in Christ before God. 2:14, 15**
 - a) **We know from the study of Romans and Galatians that the Law had never been a means of salvation, but, because it had been given specifically to the Jews, it was a DIVIDING WALL that separated the Jews and the Gentiles. It was a part of God's covenant with Israel and did not apply to the Gentiles.**

 - b) **If that WALL of the Law remained between them, there could never be a spiritual relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles.**

 - c) **That WALL of the Law, which had been like a tutor to show the Jews their sinfulness before God and prepare them for the coming of Christ (SEE: Galatians 3:23-25), has been taken away so that all of mankind might stand together in the Grace of God and come together to God through faith in Christ.**

- 3) **The CROSS has brought Jews and Gentiles together in perfect PEACE WITH GOD (SEE: Romans 5:1) and PEACE WITH EACH OTHER so that there is now no division at all between them. 2:16**

- 4) **This PEACE has been made known equally to both Jews and Gentiles so that they might jointly share this relationship with God through Christ. 2:17**

- 5) **Through Christ, both Jews and Gentiles now have the same free access to God through Christ by the Holy Spirit. There is not one means of access for the Jews and another for the Gentiles to God in His salvation. 2:18**

- 6) In the Body of Christ, not only universally but also in the local bodies of believers, the Jews and Gentiles are to be one, with equal standing as fellow citizens of His kingdom. Their different backgrounds are not to hinder this relationship. 2:19-22**
- a) There would be no separate fellowships of Jews and Gentiles. Rather, they are to accept one another as fellow citizens in their relationship with God through Christ and live in perfect harmony with one another.**
 - b) NOTE THE PROBLEMS OF: Romans 14 and I Corinthians, chapters 8-10, where the Jews and Gentiles could not get along with one another and had to be strongly taught about their relationship and what God expected of them in that relationship.**
 - c) On the human level, they might still feel differences between them, but this was not to be carried over into the spiritual realm as something that would separate them or hinder fellowship.**
 - d) Note the diversity of backgrounds in the churches of the New Testament, where there were Jews and Gentiles, masters and slaves, rich and poor and high class and low class believers all mixed in one body of believers. All were to have the same standing in the body of believers with no distinctions made among them.**
 - e) As their Savior and Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself would be the binding factor in their relationship with each other. 2:20**
 - f) The goal of this oneness in the body of believers was to permit their relationship to make them into a holy temple before God and a place where God's presence could dwell. 2:21, 22**
- 5. The Perfect Fulfillment of God's Plan in True Salvation 3:1-13**
- a. In the Old Testament, God's plan of salvation for ALL mankind was somewhat of a MYSTERY. There were passages where it seems to be taught, but these passages were not easily understood by the Jews and so there was no clear understanding of this plan.**

- b. Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles (SEE: Galatians 2:7-9), had had the MYSTERY made clear to Him (and to the other Apostles) that the Gentiles were fully the fellow-heirs and fellow-partakers of the promise of salvation in Christ. 3:1-6**
- c. This MYSTERY was not fully revealed by God until the appointed time, the period of Paul's life, when God was ready to complete and to carry out His plan of salvation for all mankind. 3:5**
- d. Though Paul also reached many Jews, it was the carrying of the Truth of this MYSTERY to the Gentiles that was to be his major responsibility and commitment for his entire ministry. 3:7-10**
- 1) It was because of the GRACE of God (the unmerited bestowing of His favor in calling Paul to ministry) that he had been given this responsibility by God to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. 3:7**
 - 2) Though he seems to count himself unworthy of such a calling and approaches it in a humble way, he counts it a great blessing and privilege to have been chosen in this way by God. 3:8**
 - 3) His responsibility is also to fully bring to light all of the Truths of this plan of God for the Gentiles so that there might be no mistake in their understanding concerning God's purposes and the extent of His outreach to the Gentiles. 3:9, 10**
- e. Though it was not fully revealed in the Old Testament, this was still the eternal plan of God that the salvation of mankind should be centered entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ and that we would have complete confidence in Him as God's perfect answer to our sinful lost condition. 3:11, 12**
- f. Paul concludes this section by mentioning that all of the sufferings and tribulations (he is now in the Roman prison but had suffered for Christ throughout his entire ministry) (SEE ALSO: II Corinthians 4:7-12; 11:22-33) he has gone through for Christ and the Gospel are not to discourage them. Rather, they are to recognize that these are for their glory and benefit, and are to rejoice in the salvation God has brought into their lives. 3:13**

B. THE SPIRITUAL APPLICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUE SALVATION **3:14-6:20**

1. Paul's Prayer For the Proof in Them of the Presence of True Salvation. **3:14-21**

a. As previously noted, the contents and purposes of the two prayers in Ephesians are different.

- 1) The first prayer, Ephesians 1:16-23, deals with their need for clear understanding of the Truth of Salvation itself. Though they are Christians, they might not have fully understood or appreciated all of these wonderful truths of their Salvation.**
- 2) This second prayer, Ephesians 3:14-21, deals with the challenges and responsibilities of living the Christian life AFTER they have come into the saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This understanding is also necessary so that they can experience the fullest possible relationship with the Lord and carry out His will.**

b. The contents of this second prayer.

- 1) He introduces this prayer with the acknowledgement that the Father is the controller and source of everything in the world, and that all that we have in the way of spiritual blessing and achievement is due to Him. Nothing can be done or enjoyed in the Christian life that does not come from Him. This leads us to complete and final dependence on Him.** **3:14-16a**
- 2) "To be strengthened with might/power by His Spirit in the inner man." This speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit, taught in such passages as John 14:16-18, Romans, chapter 8, Galatians 5:16 and Ephesians 6:17, 18, of the Holy Spirit both in giving us the inner strength to overcome the difficulties and problems of the Christian life and also giving us strength to resist and overcome the temptations of sin that daily confront us.** **3:16b**
- 3) "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." This phrase, together with the phrases that follow, does not, in this context, refer to them coming into a saving relationship with the Lord by**

- faith. That has already been settled in their lives. Rather, it seems to refer to the need in their lives for a daily close walk and fellowship with the Lord, and the experiencing of the full blessing of their relationship with Him. SEE: John 15:4-6. 3:17a**
- 4) “That ye, being rooted and grounded in love.” In other versions, this phrase is connected with the one before, and is the result of Christ dwelling in their hearts. The meaning of this phrase would be that they have personally experienced the LOVE OF CHRIST Himself, and this love has filled their hearts. The presence of this love in their hearts will produce two major results. 3:17b-19a**
- a) “May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height.” This gives the idea of having a full understanding of the Truth, and of the will and purposes of God both now and in the future.**
- b) “And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” This is not just possessing the love of Christ but it also carries the idea of being controlled and motivated by this love in living their lives. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14, 15.**
- 5) “THAT ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” If everything he mentions in this prayer is present in their lives, the RESULT will be that they will completely be the Christians God wants them to be, with God molding and shaping their lives and manifesting His presence in their lives before others as they live in this world. SEE: Philippians 1:20, 21. 3:19b**
- 6) He closes this prayer with a BENEDECTION that is directly related to the prayer that he had just offered for them. 3:20, 21**
- a) “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” 3:20**
- 1)) In this first part of the benediction, he speaks of the BENEFITS of this right relationship with the Lord. When the things he has prayed for are fulfilled in our lives we can expect God to work in and through us in mighty ways. This would include getting**

things from Him in prayer, seeing spiritual fruit come from our lives and being the kind of Christians that would be examples and influences with others.

2)) These benefits only come to spiritual Christians. No matter how others might seek them, their lives will remain empty and fruitless until they meet God's conditions for the bestowing of His blessing and favor. SEE: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; I John 1:7.

3)) The "POWER" that works in us is the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit Who freely works in the lives of those who are in the right relationship with the Lord and are depending on Him to work.

b) "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." The fulfillment of all of this in them will bring the glory and honor and exaltation to God rather than to man. This will cause us to worship Him with deep love and respect, submitting our lives completely to Him. 3:21

2. The Outworking of True Salvation in the Spirituality of Relationships in the Body of Believers 4:1-16

a. The "WORTHY" walk of each individual believer. 4:1

1) He begins this plea for a "worthy" walk with the phrase "THEREFORE."

a) This reminds us of the opening of the plea for dedication of life in Romans 12:1, 2 where Paul based the plea on the "MERCY OF GOD," taught in Romans, chapters 1-11. God had so richly poured out His Mercy on them as completely unworthy sinners. In making this plea, Paul is teaching that, if all that they had received in the Lord Jesus Christ by the "MERCY OF GOD" means anything at all to them, dedicating their lives completely to Him is the least they can give Him in return.

b) In this passage, Ephesians 4:1, the use of the opening phrase "THEREFORE" would have the same emphasis and application to their lives. He has just finished the section dealing with God's

salvation for all mankind and how this salvation is entirely by the **GRACE OF GOD** through the Lord Jesus Christ (SEE: 1:3-14) and **FAITH** in those who receive it. The same conclusion would be reached that, if this pouring out of the Grace of God in Christ means anything at all to them, they will walk **WORTHY** of the Lord in living their lives before Him and the world around them.

- 2) The phrase “**WORTHY**” carries with it the idea of having a life and conduct before God that is acceptable to Him and represents what He has done in their lives in the New Birth (SEE: John 3:3-7; II Corinthians 5:17) and the standards of holiness and Christ-likeness (SEE: Romans 8:29; I Peter 1:15, 16) that He has set for them. Where there is no such outworking of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives in the way we live and conduct ourselves, I John and other books of the General Epistles cast doubt on whether or not we have ever been saved.
- 3) The “**vocation/calling**” of their lives is not what they will **DO** for Him, but rather what they **ARE** before Him in their Christian lives.

b. The preserving of the “UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.” 4:2-6

- 1) It is significant that this passage on **UNITY** precedes the passage dealing with “**THE GIFTS OF CHRIST.**”
 - a) Without **UNITY** in the body of believers in the presence and use of these gifts, the whole purpose of the gifts is destroyed and the testimony that they would help to bring is denied.
 - b) The Corinthian Church would be an example of the importance of this **UNITY** among the believers, for that church totally lacked unity (SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1-4) and this lack of **UNITY** resulted in the misuse of the gifts God had given them (SEE: I Corinthians, chapter 14) and a total loss of their testimony as a body of believers. This lack of unity even carried over to the Table of the Lord and necessitated the judgment of God on them for their actions there. SEE: I Corinthians 11:17-30. In II Corinthians 13:5, 6, he even urges them to test themselves as to whether or not they were in the faith.

- 2) **The UNITY that is referred to is spiritual unity, “UNITY OF THE SPIRIT,” based on the saving relationship that each of them would have with the Lord Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The indwelling Holy Spirit would instruct, guard and lead them on in their relationships with each other as believers. 4:3**
 - 3) **This UNITY will only be possible by the humble, sacrificial and loving attitude they maintain in their relations with each other (SEE: Philippians 2:1-4, 5-8) and by their persistent efforts (“endeavoring”) to protect this UNITY. 4:2**
 - 4) **Since everything about God Himself is ONE, how can they imagine that they can have a true body of believers in Him that is any different. 4:4-6**
- c. **The use of the “GIFT OF CHRIST” in each life. 4:7-13**
- 1) **The subject of “GIFTS” is taught in a number of different passages. SEE: Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians, chapters 12-14; Ephesians 4:7-13; and I Peter 4:10, 11. SEE ALSO: Exodus 35:29-35. where skills were provided by God to build the Tabernacle.**
 - 2) **Each of the above passages puts emphasis upon the different purposes and uses of the Gifts of the Spirit. Each person is not given the same gift as others and is to accept and use to the glory of God the gift that God has given him.**
 - 3) **The emphasis of this passage in Ephesians 4:7-13 is upon the GIFTS OF LEADERSHIP given to those in positions of authority and influence.**
- a) **The use of the phrase “GRACE” in the giving of these gifts, referred to in 4:7 speaks of the unmerited/unearned favor of God in equipping us and permitting us to serve Him in the way He chooses for us to be used. Each one of us is to carry out God’s purposes in the way we use the gift He bestows on us. It is a great privilege to be so equipped and used by God in His work and we are to do it in ways that please and honor Him. 4:7**

- b) **These Leadership Gifts are GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT, but they are given to us by Christ Himself in His exalted position in heaven at the right hand of the Father. SEE: Philippians 2:9-11.**
- c) **There are five of these Leadership Gifts listed here. 4:11**
- 1)) **APOSTLE.** This office, with its authority and special use by God, was given only during that first century of the history of Christianity, and it ended when the last of the Apostles, John, died in about 95 A. D. It was necessary when there was no written New Testament and the Gospel was first preached in the known world of that day and churches were established. The number of the Apostles was also limited, with Paul being the twelfth one that God chose to replace Judas Iscariot.
 - 2)) **PROPHET.** This office was connected with the giving of special revelations from God in the time when there was no written/assembled New Testament. We see this office and its ministry mentioned several times in I Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14, but it is clearly stated in I Corinthians 13:8-13 that this ministry would cease when the “perfect” would come, the completed and final revelation of God in the New Testament.
 - 3)) **EVANGELISTS, PASTORS AND TEACHERS.** These offices are still present and necessary in the church today for the ongoing of the work of God and the continued spread of the Gospel. Each of these offices is a GIFT from God to the person called to that office by God. The Evangelists would seem to do the work of reaching new places, while Pastors and Teachers might concentrate their work only in a single local church.
- d) **The two main purposes and functions of these men given the LEADERSHIP GIFTS is important to note: 4:12, 13**
- 1)) **“FOR the perfecting/equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry/work of service.”** The first clear intent of God in giving these leadership skills was to use these gifted men not only to be leaders of the churches but also to prepare the believers themselves to be used to spread the Gospel and help in the work of the local church. Rather than these leaders carrying the entire

responsibility for the work, their efforts would be multiplied by adding the dedicated labor of every member of the body of believers. SEE: Exodus 18:17-26; Numbers 11:11-15, 16-30; Acts 6:1-6, 7; and Acts 8:3-40. 4:12a

2)) **“FOR the edifying/building up of the body of Christ.”** We note the emphasis upon this in I Corinthians 14 where the phrase **“EDIFY”** is used a number of times as the gifts of Tongues and Prophecy are discussed. In the Corinthian Church there was the temptation to use the gifts they had been given for selfish and self-exalting purposes rather than for the spiritual purposes God had intended. Anyone possessing leadership gifts was therefore strictly warned against their misuse in any way. Rather, they were to humbly use their gifts to build up the body of believers spiritually. 4:12b

3)) **The results of the dedicated and proper use of these Leadership Gifts would be a body of believers that would be united, spiritually mature, devoted to the Lord and prepared to be used by God for the furthering of His work.** 4:13

d. **The spiritual growth of each person in the “BODY.”** 4:14-16

1) **This passage is closely connected with the previous passage that had dealt with the LEADERSHIP GIFTS and their intended purpose and use in the body of believers. It gives a picture of what each member of the body of believers will be like when they are properly trained, unified and spiritually prepared to take their part in the ongoing of the work.**

2) **“THAT/AS A RESULT we henceforth be no more children (babes in Christ..SEE: I Peter 2:2, 3), tossed about.....”** 2:14

a) **Although they might have come into a saving relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, the baby untaught Christians are very open to false teaching that will always be present around him. Satan is a clever enemy and he uses these false teachers to lead sincere Christians astray. There is a major discussion of the dangers of Satan’s work in chapter 6:10-20 and how we can spiritually guard against him.**

- b) It is therefore the will of God that new Christians be disciplined by leaders and older Christians to help them to grow in the Lord (SEE: II Peter 3:18) so that they have the discernment they need to resist the false teachers and to stand for the Truth.
- 3) Our maturing/growing up as Christians is unto the Lord Himself who is the Savior and King of our individual lives and the Head of the body of believers as a whole. He not only has the right of control over us as individuals, but also the same right over the entire body of believers. This will not only bring great honor and glory to Him, but it will also make us and the entire body of believers more spiritually effective for the Lord. 2:15, 16
3. The Changes in a Believer's Life in True Salvation 4:17-31
- a. These changes are noted in a number of different passages. SEE: Romans, chapter 6; I Corinthians 6:12-20; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians, chapters 5, 6; Philippians 3:7-14; Colossians, chapters 3, 4; I Thessalonians, chapters 4, 5; I John, chapters 1-4.
- b. In this passage he teaches:
- 1) The nature of their former lives as unsaved people (SEE: Ephesians 2:1-3, 11, 12) 4:17-19
- a) In their former lives as unsaved people, they lived like any other unsaved people in the lusts of their flesh, excluded from the life of God and living in complete darkness. These Ephesian Christians were just like any other unsaved people before they were saved.
- b) They willfully chose to harden their hearts and give themselves over to every kind of sin. No matter how terrible some of these sins might be, the unsaved person was capable of practicing any or all of them. SEE: Romans 1:18-32; Galatians 5:17-21.
- 2) The changes that might still be necessary in the lives of these Christians in the Ephesian Church. 4:20-31
- a) Though they are Christians, some of these sins/practices might have carried over into their Christian lives and need to be

- strongly dealt with. It is true for Christians of every age that without strong teaching on the subject of separation from sin and the world in their new life, they might be tempted to continue some of their old practices and never really please God by the holiness of their lives and their devotion to Him. 4:20, 21**
- b) Steps they are to take in their lives. 4:22-31**
- 1)) They are to “lay aside the old self.” This is the decision that they are not to going to practice the things they formerly held dear and that those things are to be put aside and not be part of their lives any more. 4:22**
 - 2)) They are to be “renewed in the spirit of your mind.” This has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives to lead them into holy living before God. He both changes their desires and enables them to have victory. SEE: Galatians 5:16. 4:23**
 - 3)) They are to “put on the new man/self which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Though this new man/self has come by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, it is our own decision as to whether we will truly live by the new nature that we have from God and are willing to take the spiritual steps that will bring this to pass. 4:24**
 - 4)) Areas of their lives affected by walking in the new self 4:25-31**
 - a)) They will no longer lie but will speak only the truth 4:25**
 - b)) They will no longer be controlled by their anger 4:26, 27**
 - c)) They will no longer steal but will earn money honestly 4:28**
 - d)) Their tongues will only speak what edifies others 4:29**
 - e)) They will not grieve (work against) the Holy Spirit 4:30**
 - f)) All evil feelings and expressions will be taken away 4:31**

**4. The Effects of These Changes on Every Kind of Relationship
In True Salvation. 4:32-6:9**

a. Relationships Between Believers in the Body of Believers. 4:32-5:21

- 1) Compare this teaching with the situation of the Corinthian Church. SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1-4; chapter 5:1-13; chapter 6:1-11; chapters 8-10; chapter 11:17-34.**
 - a) In the Corinthian Church, the believers had problems at every level of church life. They had problems of relationships in ordinary church life, in dealing with the immoral man in their midst, in disputes between members over wrongs committed, in relationships between Jews and Gentiles and even in their coming together to share the Table of the Lord.**
 - b) They seemed to lack any tenderness toward God in dealing with these problems and may even have purposely and arrogantly turned away from any spiritual solutions to them.**
- 2) The teachings in this section of Ephesians are clear that problems of relationships between believers in the body of believers are to be GUARDED AGAINST BEFORE they ever occur so that they never raise problems in the church. Once they enter into church life, they are more difficult to deal with. The same principle would be true in the discussions concerning the other three relationships that follow.**
- 3) The areas they are to GUARD in their church relationships are:**
 - a) They are to have a humble and tender FORGIVING ATTITUDE toward each other when some perceived wrong has been committed against them. 4:32**
 - 1)) In comparing this with Romans 12:17-20, where believers might commit some evil against other believers, I Corinthians 6:1-11, where believers had suffered loss at the hands of other believers, and Philippians 1:14-18, where some of the brethren had been preaching against Paul in his prison situation, we note that they are not only to humbly accept the wrong done to them but are to**

leave everything in the hands of the Lord Himself to deal with the offending persons.

2)) We also note that in this verse and in some of the teaching that follows it, the **EXAMPLE OF CHRIST** is used guide them in the responses they themselves will show when wrong has been committed against them.

a)) This subject of the **EXAMPLE OF CHRIST** is used many times in the New Testament to motivate them. **SEE: Matthew 9:36-38 (compassion); Luke 9:23 (cross bearing); John, chapter 13 (servanthood); John 15:10 (obedience); 15:18-25 (suffering persecution); Romans 15:1-4 (not pleasing ourselves); 15:6-8 (accepting one another); II Corinthians, chs. 8, 9 (giving); Ephesian 5:1, 25-32 (loving others); Philippians 2:1-5-8 and Hebrews 10:5-10 (humble submission to one another).**

b)) In studying these **EXAMPLES OF CHRIST** we note that many of them stress that His actions were taken on behalf of those who were totally **UNWORTHY** of such actions and sacrifice on His part. If He would be willing to do those things on behalf of us as completely unworthy people, then we should be willing to show the same attitudes and conduct toward fellow believers.

c)) For those who truly belong to the Lord, there will therefore be strong motivation in them to follow the examples the Lord Himself has set before us to guide and control us in every area of our own lives and in our church relationships. Unwillingness to live and conduct ourselves in the same manner as the Lord would cast doubt either upon our relationship with Him in salvation or our spirituality.

b) As His dear children and members of His family, they are to be “followers of God”. This gives the idea of obedience and complete devotion to God. It would also include the “fear”/complete reverence and bowing down to Him from the heart for Him that is taught throughout the Old Testament and is emphasized again in the New Testament. **SEE: II Corinthians 5:9. 5:1**

- c) **Following the example of Christ in His love and sacrifice of Himself on their behalf, they are to manifest a deep love for one another.** 5:2
- d) **They are not to commit the sins of those around them or listen to their enticing words. In this passage the teaching is clear that those who practice these things have no real part in relationship with God or in the saving relationship with the Lord that brings that relationship. SEE: James 4:4; I John 2:15-17.** 5:3-14
- e) **They are therefore to guard themselves in their “WALK” in the world, recognizing that they are living in evil times and that their use of their lives before God is very important.** 5:15, 16
- f) **They are also to use spiritual wisdom and commitment to Him in following the “will of the Lord.”** 5:17
- 1)) **This term, “will of the Lord”, can be used in terms of the decisions we make, the general nature of our lives before God to enjoy his approval (SEE: Romans 12;2) and in other ways.**
- 2)) **In this case, however, it is related to the subject of their personal SANCTIFICATION, and the separation from the world unto holiness that this signifies and requires. SEE ALSO: Colossians 1:9; I Thessalonians 4:1-3-8**
- g) **They are to be “FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.” The issue here is not whether or not wine can be consumed at all (some say that this passage justifies drinking wine as long as no drunkenness occurs), but it has to do with what our desires are and what fills our lives and is important to us.** 5:18-21
- 1)) **The unsaved man or the carnal Christian is filled with a deep desire to fill his life with the pleasures and things that the world has to offer. The drinking of wine would be one of these. These might satisfy a Christian from a worldly standpoint but only take away from our spiritual desires and walk with the Lord.**
- 2)) **For the spiritual Christian, his desire is for the FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in his life, leading both to the control of the**

Spirit in his daily walk with the Lord and also the producing in his life, by the Spirit, of all that God desires for him to be as a Christian.

3)) Contrary to the teaching and practice of some, this FILLING OF THE SPIRIT is not some sudden emotional experience we go through, but it has to do with our separation from all that hinders His complete work in us and a yielding of our lives to God so that the Holy Spirit can fill and freely work in us. SEE: Galatians 5:16.

4)) The FILLING OF THE SPIRIT will produce in us:

a)) New devotion to God, more spiritual communication with Him and more of His spiritual “FRUIT” in our lives. SEE: Galatians 5:22, 23. 5:19

b)) A new attitude toward life and its circumstances that causes us to accept with THANKS in the Name of the Lord all that comes because it comes from God and is for our benefit. SEE: Philippians 4:6, 7. 5:20

c)) This will also bring a new spirit of humility in our lives in our relationships with other believers and a willingness to submit our lives to others even as we submit to the Lord. This would not only apply to leaders, but it also has to do with having a humble attitude in our role in the church. 5:21

b. Relationships Between Husbands and Wives 5:22-33

1) This relationship, in all kinds of circumstances, is dealt with in many passages in the Scriptures. SEE, for instance: I Corinthians 7, where he speaks both of the concern for the husband and wife about the needs of each other; 11:1-16, where the wife’s attitude toward her husband is to be shown in the way she dresses and conducts herself even as they both recognize that they are equally important before the Lord; and I Peter 3:1-7 where the wife is to live a quiet Godly before her husband, and the husband, in turn, is to show deep respect for his wife.

2) The relationship of the WIFE to the husband. 5:22-24, 33b

a) Though both the husband and wife are equally important to God (SEE: I Corinthians 11:11, 12), in their husband-wife relationship the woman is to be submitted to the man. SEE: Colossians 3:16

1)) This was God's plan from the beginning and is seen in such examples as Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary and others. For God to work out His will in their lives, their relationship with each other also had to be in conformity with His will.

2)) Contrary to the practice of some, this "submission" does not permit the dictatorship of the husband over the wife. Rather, it has to do with the LEADERSHIP of the husband in their relationship and in their home. It carries with it the full responsibilities of being wise spiritual husbands as well as the full responsibilities of leadership in the raising and training of their children.

3)) The example he uses here ("AS") is that of the headship of the Lord over the Church and the submission of the Church to the Lord.

4)) This does not take away the responsibility of the wife in advising, encouraging and working with her husband in her own responsibilities in the home, and for the wife herself to be the spiritual "Woman of God" God expects her to be.

5)) All of this seems to indicate that her primary responsibilities in this submission is in meeting the needs of the husband, the children and the home itself, and making the home everything that God wants it to be (SEE: Proverbs 31:10-27)

b) Any spiritual woman coming into the marriage relationship is to fully accept and be dedicated to this role in their marriage.

c) The one further reference in this passage to the responsibilities of the wife in this role of being submissive to her husband is found in Ephesians 5:33b where she is told that she is to RESPECT her

husband. This gives the idea of honoring him in her attitude, feelings and words about him.

- d) The manner/form in which this submission expresses itself is not specifically taught in these verses, but it is extensively dealt with in Proverbs 31:10-27 and I Peter 3:1-6.**
- 1)) In Proverbs 31:10-27, her dedication to home and family, and the unceasing loving and uncomplaining spirit she manifests, are an open testimony both to her own family and to the entire town. God Himself approves of her and she is commended as a truly virtuous woman.**
- 2)) In I Peter 3:1-6, her meek and quiet spirit and her Godly life will vitally influence her husband and lead him into a close spiritual walk with the Lord.**
- e) As taught in the next part of this section, this “submission” to the husband does not take away from the responsibility of the husband to be the spiritual spouse that God intends him to be, exercising his role with great love and tenderness. The submissive Christian wife has a right to expect that! Therefore, she not only completely fulfills her God-given role in the marriage, but the husband also fulfills his role with the same degree of spiritual dedication.**
- 3) The relationship of the HUSBAND to the wife. 5:25-33**
- a) As we have suggested, the ROLE of the husband in the husband-wife relationship is different from that of the wife. He is to be the LEADER in the home and the wife is to “submit” to his leadership. However, his responsibilities before God in being the RIGHT KIND of a husband/leader are very clearly laid out in this section of Scripture. Failure on his part to carry out these responsibilities in the marriage relationship would be dealt with by God. It is important, therefore, that men fully recognize and accept the responsibilities of being a husband in marriage.**
- b) The responsibilities of the husband in the husband-wife relationship. SEE ALSO: Colossians 3:9; I Peter 3:7.**

- 1)) **The MANNER with which he exercises leadership in the husband-wife relationship is to be modeled on the EXAMPLE of the Lord Himself in His relationship with us. As the wife was to submit to the leadership of her husband like the Church submits to Christ, so the husband is to conduct himself in this relationship in the way the Lord conducts Himself both in our salvation and also in His walk with us in the Christian life. This will be emphasized in every part of the discussion concerning the husband's responsibilities.**

- 2)) **He begins by teaching that the LOVE of the husband for the wife is to be modeled after the LOVE that the Lord Jesus demonstrated in His coming from heaven to sacrifice Himself for our sins ("the church") and to bring us into a saving relationship with Himself. 5:25-27**
 - a)) **He is not speaking here of "the church" simply as a local organization but rather as a spiritual body of believers in which all true believers are a part.**

 - b)) **His purpose in pouring out such love for us is not just to save us from our sins but to present every member of that spiritual body of believers holy and pure before God both in salvation and in the Christian life.**

- 3)) **This truth leads to the emphasis on the QUALITY OF THE LOVE that the husband has for the wife. The love that he has for his wife is to be of the same quality and just as strong as the love that he has for himself. He is dealing with the truth in life that we love ourselves more than we love anyone else. 5:28,29a**

- 4)) **When this QUALITY in his love for his wife is present, he will NOURISH AND CHERISH HER just as Christ does the Church. This speaks of the sacrificial tenderness, loving concern and constant care of her in the daily treatment the husband gives his wife in their marriage. This is also modeled after the Lord and His tender care of us. 5:29b, 30**

- 5)) **The LEAVING of his mother and father not only speaks of the exclusiveness of their marriage relationship but it also speaks of**

the fact that, while he still loves the members of the family in which he was born, his entire loyalty and commitment of heart and life is now to his wife on the human level. His wife, of course, is to have the same loyalty and commitment to him. 5:31, 32

- 6)) In the closing verse, he repeats the emphasis upon the QUALITY of the love the husband is to have for his wife. 5:33a**
- 7)) This is not mentioned in this passage, but I Peter 3:7 sets the same standard for the husband that the wife was to follow in the way she REGARDS him in Ephesians 5:33b. This verse in I Peter 3:7 speaks of the deep respect and honor that the husband also is to show to his wife. That verse indicates that if this attitude of honor and respect is not present in their marriage relationship God will also deny him blessing and favor. SEE ALSO: Proverbs 31:28, 29.**

c. Relationships Between Parents (Fathers) and Children. 6:1-4

- 1) This subject is also dealt with in many different passages in the Scriptures, both in the examples that are given of success and failure in such relationships and in the teaching concerning how these relationships are to be conducted. SEE, for instance: Genesis 9:18-29 (Noah); chapter 19 (Lot); chapter 22 (Abraham); chapter 27 (Isaac); Deuteronomy 4:10; 6:1-9; 11:18-21; Proverbs, chapters 1-8; 31:10-31 (a virtuous wife); and Colossians 3:20, 21.**
- 2) There are several truths taught in this passage about this:**
 - a) The children themselves are to submit themselves to their parents (father) in their training and discipline, showing great respect for them and living in harmony with them. 5:1-3**
 - b) Though the mother has an important place in the care and nurture of the children, the father has the special responsibility of TRAINING the children in the way they should go. This same responsibility is also emphasized in Deuteronomy, chapters 4, 6 and 11 and in Proverbs, chapters 1-9. 5:4**

- 1)) **If the father is indifferent or neglectful in carrying out this responsibility, the children will not be properly trained and may even turn away from all that God desires for them.**
- 2)) **We see this in the failure of the generation of Joshua in preparing the new generation to follow the Lord. This led to the sins of the book of Judges. We see this in the failure of Samuel, the great prophet, in training his sons. We see this also in the failure of David in properly training his sons Absalom and Solomon and the failures they experienced.**
- 3)) **The same principle has applied to every generation since then, including today's generation. Failures can come even in the lives of faithful servants of God when this principle is neglected and their children turn rebellious.**
- 4)) **This passage (6:4a) emphasizes the correct approach in training. It is be loving rather than harsh or unreasonable.**

d. Relationships Between Masters and Slaves

6:5-9

- 1) **There are several passages where the master-slave relationship is discussed. SEE: Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1; Philemon; I Peter 2:18-20-25.**
- 2) **Situations for master-slave relationships**
 - a) **Many slaves had been saved in that day, but had unsaved masters. SEE: I Peter 2:18-20. Because these Christians were still slaves, the unsaved masters would continue to treat them harshly. Knowing that they had become Christians might even cause these masters to treat them worse than before. The question would be: how should the Christian slave act or conduct himself in such a situation?**
 - b) **In that day, there were also situations where both the masters and the slaves had been converted. SEE: Philemon, vs. 10-16. They might even be members of the same body of believers. Since they were both Christians, the question would be: how should their**

master-slave relationship be affected and changed to reflect their spiritual relationship in the Lord?

- 3) Though some have interpreted these teachings on this subject differently, based on Philemon, vs. 14-16, Paul does not directly outlaw slavery in the passages where he discusses it. Rather, he seeks to direct them into correct spiritual responses to their situations.**
- 4) In this passage in Ephesians 6:5-9, (SEE ALSO: Colossians, chapters 3:22-4:1), Paul addresses both slaves and masters. In both cases, he is speaking to Christians who are expected to walk spiritually, whatever their situation might be.**

a) Advice to the slaves: 6:5-8

- 1)) They are to be obedient to their masters and completely submissive to them. 6:5**
- 2)) They are not to serve their masters superficially, but are to serve them as though they were serving the Lord Himself rather than just a human master. 6:6a**
- 3)) Therefore, in His will, they are to do their work from the heart, applying themselves completely to it. 6:6b**
- 4)) They are to have the right feelings and attitudes toward their masters as though to the Lord himself. 6:7**
- 5)) They are to recognize that their final reward for such faithful service will come from God Himself. 6:8**

b) Advice to the masters: 6:9

- 1)) They are to have the right attitudes toward their slaves.**
- 2)) They are not be harsh or threatening to them.**
- 3)) They are to regard them and treat them with the full knowledge that the Lord Himself is their own master and that He does not**

respect one above another. As they would desire to be treated by HIM, they should also treat those who labor under their authority.

5. The Spiritual Battles to be Fought in True Salvation. 6:10-20

a. As we live in this world as those who belong to the Lord, we will always be tempted and opposed by SATAN HIMSELF, who, by the evil forces at his command, will try to defeat us in our personal lives and in the lives we live before others. 6:10-13

- 1) Strong decisions on our part and strong measures we must adopt in our daily lives are necessary if he is to be defeated and we will daily have victory over Him. 6:10-12**
- 2) Failure to battle against him, and to fully use the spiritual means that God has given us to resist him and remain victorious, will mean certain defeat for us.**
- 3) Victory over him is not only possible but it is also the will of God for our lives as He lives in our lives by the Holy Spirit. SEE: I John 4:4.**
- 4) Though it is true that we cannot have such victory in our own strength (SEE: Romans 7:7-25), as we are daily equipped with the spiritual “ARMOR OF GOD” that victory can come.**
- 5) He is also emphasizing using the “WHOLE/ENTIRE armor of God.” Every one of the elements God leads him to emphasize has an important place in our lives and we cannot neglect or ignore any of them. Failure in any area leaves us exposed to the devil’s temptations/work in leading us astray.**
- 6) Therefore, if we have any love for the Lord at all and any desire to live pure and holy lives before Him so that we please Him with our lives, we will earnestly stand in His strength and use every spiritual means He provides to live such lives of victory, defeating Satan and his forces.**

b. The nature and elements of the “ARMOR OF GOD.” 6:14-20

- 1) “TRUTH.” This phrase has to do with complete and exclusive adherence both to the book (the Bible) where the Truth is found, and also to the complete understanding, belief and commitment to following that BODY OF TRUTH taught in the Bible, without compromising the Truth or wavering in our stand. 6:14a**
 - a) SEE: John 8:32; 16:13; 17:16; Romans 1:25; I Corinthians 13:6; Ephesians 4:15, 21; II Timothy 2:15; III John 1:1, 3, 4, 8 .**
 - b) The Truth of God He reveals is: understandable, is clear in its intent and applications, is without contradiction in all of the passages where it is taught and is unchanging/eternal through all of history.**
 - c) Satan will seek to undermine the Truth by lies, cause us to doubt it or lead us to change that Truth through the teachings of false teachers, our failure to be taught by the Spirit (SEE: John 16:13), and the temptation we face to not fully apply the Truth to our lives.**
- 2) “RIGHTEOUSNESS.” The meaning of this is: separation from sin and the realm of Satan and sinful people UNTO a holy and God-pleasing life where every part of our lives (thoughts, words, desires, feelings, attitudes, motivations and actions) is devoted to things that are approved by God and pleasing to Him. 6:14b**
 - a) SEE: Romans 6:1-23-7:6; I Corinthians 6:12-18-20; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 2:1-3, 10; James 4:1-4; I John 2:15-17.**
 - b) Since we were living in Satan’s realm of sin, under his full influence and with the companionship of His people before we were saved, it would be his desire to draw us back into those things and to ENSLAVE us (SEE: Romans 6:16-22, 23) in those sinful bonds again.**
 - c) In our relationship with Him, God has the will and desire to ENSLAVE us in righteousness so that we are freed from Satan’s power and influence in our lives. SEE AGAIN: Romans 6:16-22.**

Though this can only come with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, it still requires that we ourselves take a stand in this matter by taking all the steps that are necessary to live holy and righteous lives before God.

- 3) “THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.”** The meaning of this phrase is: We ourselves are affected and fully changed as the Gospel has come into our own lives through the Lord Jesus Christ and our faith in Him. We also experience in our lives all that the coming of this saving relationship with the Lord is meant to bring to us. Finally, we are led to share this same “GOSPEL OF PEACE” with others so that they also can experience all that it means and does in their lives. **6:15**
- 4) “THE SHIELD OF FAITH.”** The meaning of this is: This is the means by which we have come into this saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is also the means by which we live our Christian lives and walk daily before Him. **SEE: Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8, 9.** This FAITH is a response to the GRACE, the unmerited/unearned favor of God shown in our lives, and is simply accepting as a GIFT from Him His salvation and the daily strength and guidance that we need to live our lives. **6:16**
- 5) “THE HELMET OF SALVATION.”** The meaning of this phrase is: Eternally, we are saved through our relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and our lives now **STAND FOR ALL** that the Lord Himself means to us and the changes that His salvation have brought to our lives. The Lord (and His salvation) is very dear to us, and we are not at all ashamed of Him, what He means to us, has done for us and the privilege we have of living for Him. **SEE: Luke 9:23-26; Romans 1:15, 16, 17.** **6:17a**
- 6) “THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.”** The meaning of this phrase is clear: God has given us His complete and eternal **WORD** in the Bible. We completely stand on His **WORD**, being saved through its following its Truth, trusting it completely and basing our **HOPE** entirely on its promises for life and eternity, and using it as the only “rule of faith and practice” in our walk and witness in the world. **6:17b**

7) “PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT.” 6:18-20

- a) Some have wondered if these three verses are even part of the “ARMOR OF GOD.” However, there seems to be no break between the discussion of the other elements of the “ARMOR” and these verses and so we include them.
- b) There seem to a number of main reasons for the use of PRAYER in standing/protecting ourselves against the “wiles of the devil.”
SEE: 6:11
- 1)) In John 15:7, the Lord teaches that, if we are truly “abiding/living” in Him, prayer will gain for us all that God wants to give us and do with us in our Christian lives.
 - 2)) In Philippians 4:6, 7, it is taught that, when we earnestly pray, and do so with “THANKSGIVING” to God, the deepest needs in our personal lives will be met and we will be free from worry and fear even in the worst of circumstances.
 - 3)) In Acts 4:23-31, we learn that united prayer will also bring protection and further strength and blessing on work for Him.
 - 4)) In such passages as James 5:14-16, we are taught that prayer will also help those with physical needs.
 - 5)) In this passage from Ephesians 6:18-20 and in most of the prayers of Paul himself (Ephesians 1:16-23, 3:14-21, Philippians 1:9-11 and Colossians 1:9-14), prayer is to be offered on behalf of the spiritual needs of others (including their full knowledge of the Truth and their walk in it), the needs of others for strength and protection and for the blessing of God on workers for God in the spread of the Gospel.

III. CONCLUSION 6:21-24

- A. He introduces Tychicus who apparently will be his messenger for them to bring this epistle to them. 6:21, 22

1. From his description of this man whom he describes as a “beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord,” it is possible that he is not known to the Ephesians and Paul is making sure that they will properly receive and trust him when he appears in their midst.
2. Apparently, Tychicus has been with Paul in Rome and has spent enough time with him there that Paul would both be ministered to by him and be encouraged by him. In Acts 20:4, he is mentioned as coming from Asia, perhaps Ephesus, and he was, together with Aristarchus and others, a companion of Paul on a trip back to Macedonia from Ephesus. He would be one of Paul’s trusted followers and was probably originally trained by Paul for the ministry.
3. He is not mentioned with Aristarchus in Acts 27:2, as one who accompanied Paul (as a fellow-prisoner?!) from Palestine to Rome, so he may not have gone with Paul on his trip back to Palestine where Paul was arrested and imprisoned for about two years.
4. We note that Paul was visited and encouraged by a number of different men he had won and trained in the Lord during both of his imprisonments in Rome, including Epaphroditus of Philippi.

B. THE CLOSING BLESSING/BENEDICTION 6:23, 24

1. We note that Paul closes most of his epistles with a closing blessing on the ones to whom he is writing. Sometimes, these are more than simple blessings and are given more in the form of a benediction. Some would use the ending of this Epistle to the Ephesians for that purpose in churches today.
2. Paul had often used benedictions. SEE: Romans 16:24-27; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 3:20, 21; I Thessalonians 3:11-13; 5:23; II Thessalonians 3:16; Hebrews 13:20, 21.
3. In this benediction:
 - a. “Peace be to the brethren and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In this part, he is wishing that they will

be blest and enjoy these special spiritual qualities in their lives that come from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- b. “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity (incorruptible/pure/from the heart love)” He wishes that they might have a deep and true heart love for the Lord and might constantly experience and manifest this love in their lives. The result will be that they will experience God’s constant presence and sustaining strength in their lives. SEE: II Corinthians 12:7-10.**

OBSERVATIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

- 1. Though the length of the Epistle to the Romans is much longer than the Epistle to the Ephesians, we note how closely the doctrinal section of the Epistle to the Ephesians (SEE: 1:3-3:13) follows the pattern of the Epistle to the Romans (SEE: 1:18-11:36) with its emphasis on all aspects of God’s salvation for mankind. When studied together, these two epistles answer all the questions we might have about the NEED in our lives, the BASIS for the offering of God’s salvation and the MEANS of that salvation.**
- 2. We also note that the practical sections of the two epistles also very closely follow each other. Even the introductions to the practical sections of the two epistles emphasize the truth that all that God has done for us in salvation should lead us to complete dedication to the Lord and to commitment to walking in ways that are pleasing to Him. Both epistles emphasize complete separation from the world of sin to lives that are holy before God, and set forth the standards for such lives.**
- 3. We also note the emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, and how that ministry meets the deepest needs of our personal lives and our relationship with others in the body of believers. In the light of the false teaching in our day on this subject, we need to be reminded of what we can expect of Him in every age of church life so that we do not live lives that are empty and defeated as we face the temptations and problems of life. SEE: John, chapters 14-16; Galatians, chapters 5, 6.**

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

A. THE NATURE OF THE PHILIPPIAN SITUATION

- 1. The city was located on a fertile plain about nine miles from the Aegean Sea. Neapolis, where Paul landed when he responded to the “Macedonian vision”, served as its seaport. Though Thessalonica was actually the capital of this Roman province, Philippi was regarded as “the chief city of that part of Macedonia.” It was also prominent because it was on the main road from Rome to the province of Asia.**
- 2. The people of Philippi were Roman citizens who had the right not only to vote but also to govern themselves, so they had a great deal of freedom under the Roman government and were free of some of the restrictions that applied to other areas of the empire.**
- 3. It is probable that the citizens of Philippi were anti-Semitic since no Jewish synagogue was constructed in the city. However, in other Greek cities, including those in Macedonia such as Berea and Thessalonica, there were large numbers of Jews and synagogues for them to use for worship.**
- 4. From Paul’s writings both to the Corinthians in Achaia and to the Macedonians, it is clear that the Macedonians had few of the cultural problems that the people of Achaia had.**
 - a. Corinth was the heart of the Greek culture and the people had great pride in the philosophers who had lived there and in their very high Greek culture (SEE: I Corinthians, chapter 2).**
 - b. This difference between the two regions made it easier to establish work in Macedonia, and the churches there were spared many of the problems of pride and arrogance that affected the Church at Corinth.**

B. THE FOUNDING OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH

- 1. Paul started out on his second missionary journey with Silas in about 51 A.D. This followed a contention he had had with Barnabas, his coworker on his first missionary journey, over the inclusion of Mark in their missionary team. It is also possible that Luke joined them from Antioch for this journey.**
- 2. From Paul's efforts to enter Bithynia and Mysia, it seems that their plan for this missionary journey was to reach some of the great unreached areas of Asia. If God had not prevented them, it is possible that their journeys might have later taken them to the southern cities of Ephesus, Colossae and others. At this time, they did not envision reaching any part of Europe, and such a ministry might even have seemed very strange to them with much of Asia still unreached.**
- 3. In God's plan, it was important to reach into Europe at this very time. It seems likely that, had they not responded to the "Macedonian vision" and entered eastern Europe on this missionary journey, that part of Europe might not have been reached during Paul's lifetime. Persecutions under the Romans, beginning in the mid 60's might even have hindered the entrance of the Gospel for many decades after Paul died.**
- 4. In response to the vision God gave Paul in the night (SEE: Acts 16:9), they sailed to Macedonia and entered the City of Philippi. Lydia, one of their first converts (SEE: Acts 16:12-15), opened her home to them and that home became the base of their evangelistic operations and the site of the new church. SEE: Acts 16:15, 40.**
- 5. Following the casting out of the demonic spirit from the slave girl, persecution began for them and they were cast into prison. From this experience, they witnessed the conversion of the Philippian jailor and his entire family and the continued growth of the church there before they left to proceed south to the region of Achaia.**

C. THE NATURE OF THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH

- 1. From the study of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, written in 52 and 53 A.D., and from the Epistle to the Philippians, written in 61 A.D., it is clear that the churches of Macedonia had a few problems (SEE: I Thessalonians 4:13-17; Philippians 4:1-3) but they were basically strong spiritual churches with their members dedicated to the Lord and maintaining clear spiritual testimonies both to the Christians in other areas and to the unsaved peoples where their reputations spread. SEE: I Thessalonians 1:2, 3, 6-10.**
- 2. Some feel that the Philippians did have a problem of emerging disunity. They would take this from his discussion in Philippians 2:1-4-9, where he urges them not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think and to imitate the humble attitude of the Lord in his incarnation and sacrifice on the cross for them. If there was such a problem, it apparently was not a major one, and was not to be compared in any way with the problem of disunity in the Corinthian Church (SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1-4) and did not affect their overall testimony.**
- 3. Close spiritual contact and fellowship was maintained for many years between Paul and the Philippians after the church was begun and Paul had left for Achaia and other parts of Europe and Asia.**
 - a. Paul writes that the Philippians had sent gifts to him on two separate occasions during his ministry in Thessalonica (SEE: Philippians 4:14-16; Acts 17:1-9).**
 - b. While he was imprisoned in Rome, it was this church that stood with him with encouragement and help (SEE: Philippians 4:16), and even sent Epaphroditus, one of their workers to be with him. Their help seemed to be in contrast to the attitude of others who either offered no help or even opposed him. SEE: Philippians 1:14-18.**

D. PURPOSES AND THEMES OF PHILIPPIANS

- 1. We note that there are several doctrinal themes in the Epistle to the Philippians.**
 - a. In chapter 2:5-11, the subject of the deity of Christ is taught. The teaching is clear that Christ is God, but that he voluntarily left His heavenly position and home to come down to the earth to die for our sins. Following that sacrificial work, He returned again to His former place in heaven where we are to worship and exalt Him.**
 - b. In chapter 3:1-9, he deals with the problem of the Judaizers who were teaching that the works of the Law were vitally important in salvation (SEE ALSO: Romans 3:27-31; 4:5-16; 7:1-7; Galatians 1:5-9; 2:16-21; 3:11-29). Using his testimony of salvation, Paul shows that he had once depended on the works of the Law (SEE: Philippians 3:4-6) but that he had abandoned that completely when he came to Christ through faith and found salvation in Him.**
 - c. In chapter 3:11-14, he deals with the subject of the resurrection of the dead (SEE ALSO: I Corinthians 15; I Thessalonians 4:13-17) which is related to the “RAPTURE” when Christ will come.**
- 2. In addition, there are several practical themes dealing with the Christian life. These themes would be based upon the full realization of the truths of the doctrinal themes in every life.**
 - a. In chapter 2, vs. 1-4, he deals with the subject of unity and harmony in their relationships with other Christians, emphasizing that they are to have a humble attitude by which they consider others better than themselves and focus on the needs of others rather than their own needs.**
 - b. In chapter 4, vs. 6, 7, he deals with the matter of worries and fears and teaches how our hearts can be filled with the PEACE OF GOD.**
 - c. In chapter 4, vs. 8, he deals with the control and use of the thought life in every Christian.**

E. OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

- I. INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE** 1:1, 2

- II. THE JOY OF RELATIONSHIPS, FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE FOR HIM IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES** 1:3-4:18
 - A. The Place of the Philippians in Paul's Life and Circumstances** 1:3-30
 - 1. **Their Participation With Paul in the Work of the Gospel** 1:3-6
 - 2. **Paul's Love and Prayer For Them** 1:7-11
 - 3. **Paul's Circumstances in the Prison** 1:12-19
 - 4. **Paul's Dedication to Christ and Commitment to the Work** 1:20-26
 - 5. **Paul's Plea For Their Steadfast Stand** 1:27-30

 - B. Christ's Example in Humility** 2:1-16
 - 1. **The Humility They are to Have With Each Other.** 2:1-4
 - 2. **Christ the Perfect Example of humility** 2:5-11
 - 3. **The Demonstration of Humility and Submission in Their Daily Lives** 2:12-16

 - C. Paul as an Example to Them** 2:17-3:21
 - 1. **Paul and His Co-Workers** 2:17-30
 - 2. **Paul's Life Testimony** 3:1-14
 - a. **His life as a Jew and Pharisee** 3:1-6

b. His Salvation in Christ	3:7-9
c. His life and goals as a Christian	3:10-14
3. What Paul's Testimony Should Mean In Their Lives	3:15-21
D. Standing Firm in the Lord	4:1-9
1. Settling the Problem of the Two Quarrelling Women	4:1-3
2. The Place of Right Heart Attitudes And Approaches to Life in Standing Firm in the Lord	4:4-8
3. Learning from Paul and His Life and Example.	4:9
E. Their Part in the Contentment That Paul Has in His Life, and the Lessons Paul has Learned About Contentment	4:10-19
III. CONCLUSION	4:20-23

STUDY OF THE TEXT OF PHILIPPIANS

I. THE INTRODUCTION 1:1, 2

A. We note that Paul does not need to assert his apostleship as he does in I and II Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians and other epistles.

- 1. In writing to these other churches, Paul was having to defend himself and his standing before God, for some in those churches had both doubted and criticized him. This was especially true of the Corinthians. In mentioning this in these epistles, he strongly reminds them that his calling and appointment was from God and that he had all of the rights and authority of an apostle and was equal in every way to the other apostles.**

2. In the case of the Philippians, there is no such need, for this was a church that dearly loved him and accepted him as one with standing and authority. There is no evidence that there had ever been a spirit of criticism against him in that church.
- B. Timothy is with him at the time of the writing of this epistle from prison. As Paul's close companion and son in the faith, the presence and encouragement of Timothy was very important to him. We see this again during his second imprisonment in Rome when he is facing death and some had not stood with him. He begs Timothy to come. SEE: II Timothy 4:9-13.
 - C. He presents himself as a slave/servant of the Lord. He had used this phrase before in describing his calling and position before the Lord. SEE: I Corinthians 4:1, 2
 - D. He addresses this epistle to the entire church with special emphasis on the bishops/pastors and deacons. His use of the plural in each case would seem to indicate that there was now more than one church in that city of Philippi. We note that he includes the DEACONS in this. This means that the teachings of Philippians would fit God's standards for them. SEE: I Timothy 3:8-13.
 - E. His blessing on them follows the pattern he uses in most of his epistles where he wishes them to have GRACE (sustaining strength) and PEACE (the peace OF God rather than peace WITH God through salvation in Christ. SEE: Romans 5:1)

II. THE JOY OF RELATIONSHIPS, FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE FOR HIM IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

1:3-4:18

- A. The Place of the Philippians in Paul's Life and Circumstances **1:3-30**
 1. Their Participation With Paul in the Work of the Gospel. **1:3-6**
 - a. From the time that Paul had first preached the Gospel in Philippi and had seen many believe and follow the Lord faithfully, it is clear that they always had a close relationship.

- b. **Apparently, there had never been the critical spirit or differences with him that had characterized his relationship with the believers in Corinth. (SEE: I Corinthians 3:1-14). To the contrary, their attitude was completely supportive of him as they desired to help him in any way possible.**
- c. **Paul considered them to be coworkers with him in the work of the Gospel. Some of their men had been workers with him and had visited him (Epaphroditus) in his Roman prison. The other believers in the church also had had a strong bond with him and had helped him in every way with finances and encouragement.**

2. Paul's Love and Prayer For Them 1:7-11

- a. **Even as they poured out their love for Paul, Paul, in turn, had a great love and affection for these believers in Philippi. He uses the phrase "I have you in my heart" to express the depths of the love he has for them. We note that he had said the same thing to the Corinthians but they had not responded in a similar way. SEE: II Corinthians 7:1-3**
- b. **He also has been holding them up constantly in prayer. SEE:1:3,4**
- c. **In his prayers for them, he recognizes that, though they have shown remarkable spiritual maturity, they still have spiritual needs and so he prays very specifically for them.**
 - 1) **That their love "may abound more and more in knowledge and discernment" 1:9**
 - a) **This has to do with the danger that people may have a real love for the Lord and devotion to Him but may not have knowledge and discernment in what they believe and practice in the Christian faith and life.**
 - b) **He wants them to be guarded in faith and practice so their love may be sound and approved of God.**
 - 2) **They may "approve things that are excellent so that they may be sincere and without offence until the Day of Christ." 1:10**

- a) This has to do with the purity and holiness of their lives as they live in the world. SEE: Galatians 5:13, 16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:1-3
 - b) The “Day of Christ” would refer to the coming of the Lord and the judgment (“the judgment seat of Christ”) of the Christians that will follow (SEE: I Corinthians 3:12-15; II Corinthians 5:9-11). In that day, their lives and conduct will be examined closely by the Lord and they will be judged on the basis of “what they have done in the body, whether good or bad. SEE: II Corinthians 5:10.
 - c) Paul himself had feared that time of future judgment of his life and work for the Lord. SEE: I Corinthians 3:12-15.
- 3) They “might be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.” 1:11
- a) These fruits will replace the fruits/deeds of the flesh which have to do with the sins and passions of the old life. SEE: Galatians 5:17-21.
 - b) The “fruits of righteousness” can also be connected with the “fruit of the Spirit” of Galatians 5:22, 23. They specifically refer to the change in the Christian life from lives of sin to lives of righteousness and pleasing God.
3. Paul’s Circumstances in the Roman Prison 1:12-19
- a. The progress of the Gospel through his imprisonment. 1:13, 14
 - 1) The sharing of his faith and testimony with the royal guard and everyone else in the prison, as well as in the palace itself. 1:13
 - 2) The encouragement that His life and testimony has been to the brethren in their preaching and proclaiming of the Gospel in an atmosphere of difficulty and possible fear. 1:14
 - b. The mixed responses of his coworkers to his circumstances in the way they preach and carry on the work of God. 1:15-18

- 1) Some of the brethren have been maliciously preaching against him, deliberately seeking to make his sufferings worse. He indicates that they do this through “envy and strife.” Love and sympathy for him is completely lacking in their work. He does not identify these men. Were they Corinthians? 1:15, 16
 - 2) Others preach Christ out of goodwill, completely sympathizing with him and supporting him in every way. 1:15, 17
 - 3) Paul’s reaction to these two widely different responses to his circumstances is one of thanks to God that the Gospel is being proclaimed rather than one of bitterness and anger toward those who are opposing him and making his life harder by their uncaring and unsympathetic attitudes. 1:18
 - 4) Paul’s confidence is that, through their prayer, he will be released from his prison and will be free once again to freely travel to other parts of Asia and Europe and proclaim the Truth of the Gospel. 1:19
4. Paul’s Dedication to Christ Himself and Commitment to the Work God Has Given Him to Do. 1:20-26
- a. Paul first expresses the deepest desire and purpose of his life and that is to magnify and exalt Christ through his life. He had expressed this before in II Corinthians 5:14, 15, where he states that those who live are to live unto Him. 1:20, 21.
 - b. He then expresses his dedication to ministry for the Philippians and others as a major purpose for his life. 1:22-26
 - 1) His purpose in not wanting to go immediately to be with the Lord, though that is his desire, is that he might serve them, build them up and encourage them.
 - 2) Though he is still in prison, He has the confidence that God will honor this deep desire and permit him to be with them again.
5. Paul’s plea to the Philippians both for their conduct in the world and for their stand for the faith. 1:27-30

- a. He first deals with their personal lives and their relations with other believers. 1:27
- 1) He speaks of “conduct worthy of the Gospel.” He seems to refer to the fact that IF their own lives are not straight for the Lord and IF they are not working together “with one mind” in their “striving for the faith of the Gospel”, then the witness of the Gospel will have no meaning or impact for the unsaved.
 - 2) In chapter 2:1-4, he is going to be dealing again with the subject of their unity and harmony of spirit as believers. In that passage, he will deal with the principles involved in sacrificing their own interests and desires for the sake of others.
- b. He then deals with the outside forces they will meet in the witness of the Gospel. 1:28-30
- 1) These outside forces/people who oppose them are bound for destruction and, though they are strong, the believers are not to be alarmed by them.
 - 2) These outside forces/people who oppose them will not only bring opposition, but they will also cause persecution and suffering. The believers are to accept this and to realize that it is for the sake of the Lord Himself. Paul himself has gone through suffering so they are not alone. In fact, Paul’s whole ministry has been one of suffering. SEE: II Cor. 11:22-33

B. Christ’s Example in Humility 2:1-16

1. We note that he opens the teaching and exhortation of this passage in a way that is very similar to the introduction to the exhortation concerning the dedication of our lives in Romans 12:1, 2 2:1.
 - a. In Romans 12:1, the exhortation is based on the “MERCY OF GOD” in salvation that had been taught and emphasized from chapter 1:18 to the end of chapter 11. The emphasis of the plea is that, in the light of all tht God has done for them in saving them and delivering them from their hopeless lost condition, it is

now right for God to expect them to dedicate all they have and are to Him for His complete control and use of them.

- b. In Philippians 2, vs. 1, the exhortation is based on all that Christ has done in their lives in their relationship with Christ, and all that He means to them. His help and working in them in their walk with Him is a strong reason for them to have the right relationships with other Christians who share the same work of God in their lives. If these things mean anything at all to them, they will reflect everything He has done in their lives in all their dealings with others.
- c. The matter of their relationships with each other may have been one of the problems of this Philippian Church. Rather than it simply being a guide to them, his teaching on the subject of having a spirit of humility with one another and putting others in a higher place than themselves seems to be taught for the purpose of correcting a problem and is very strongly taught. They cannot have such a spiritual walk together unless there is a spirit of HUMILITY in them. SEE ALSO: John 13 where the Lord washed the feet of his disciples and set an example. 2:2-4

2. Christ the Perfect Example of Humility. 2:5-11

- a. He has appealed to them for unity of heart and purpose. This is similar to the appeal of Ephesians 4:1-3 where he speaks of the urgency of maintaining “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” In this passage they are to have unity in their minds, in their love, in their spirits and in their purposes. 2:2-4
- b. To reinforce his plea to them he uses the EXAMPLE OF CHRIST. This is one of many places in his epistles where the example of Christ is to be their highest motivation in living their Christian lives and walking in right relationship with each other. SEE: Romans 15:1-7; Ephesians 4:32; Ephesians 5:2, 25-33.
- c. If there had not been such humbling of the Lord on our behalf, our salvation could not have come to pass. There had to be a final sacrifice for sins by someone with the power, authority and ability to take our sins upon Himself. 2:5-11

- 1) He points first to the willingness of the Lord to relinquish for a time His exalted place in heaven as the Divine Son of God so that He might bring about the means of our salvation. SEE: Galatians 4:1-7; Hebrews 10:1-10 2:6
 - 2) The Lord then came down to the earth and took upon Himself the form of a man as He committed Himself to servanthood, to serve our need for forgiveness of sins and relationship with God. 2:7
 - 3) The Lord then voluntarily went to the cross to make possible our salvation by His suffering. 2:8
 - 4) He then was exalted again to His former place in heaven where He will receive the worship of all mankind because of who He is and what He has done. SEE: Revelations, chapter 5. 2:9-11
- d. The unworthiness of those He came down to die for and save is part of the key to the impact that this example would have on these Philippians believers. From their standpoint, apart from sacrificial love and grace, He would have had every reason not to have come, but He willingly and gladly laid aside everything in heaven for a time to make that supreme sacrifice for sins. In gratitude for all that He has done for them, they are now to have the same spirit of love and sacrifice for others.
- 1) Literally, they are now to have His example as the main motivating factor in their relationships with each other. It does not matter that others may not always respond correctly in showing the same spirit with them. The example of Christ speaks of His complete commitment to making possible our salvation, and they are to show the same spirit of wholeheartedness, without any reservations, in their relationships with each other.
 - 2) They are to unconditionally bow and submit to Him. He is not only completely worthy of their unconditional submission and obedience, but He is in the position of knowing and examining their lives continually. SEE: II Corinthians 5:9-11; II Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 1:20, 21.

3. The Demonstration of This Humility and Submission in Their Daily Lives. 2:12-16

- a. Following the teaching on humility and submission, Paul is now exhorting them to demonstrate these qualities outwardly. The teaching in 2:12 has been misunderstood by some, who interpret it as meaning that we are to work FOR our salvation by our outward works. This would mean that our good works have a part in gaining and keeping our salvation.
- b. This interpretation is contrary to every other teaching concerning salvation (SEE: Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is clear that this passage is teaching that our inward faith and the presence of the qualities of humility and submission taught in 2:1-11 is to be manifested in the way we conduct ourselves before others.
- c. This outward manifestation will be a PROOF of the presence of these things in us rather than a MEANS of obtaining them. SEE: 2:15; I John, chapters 1-4.
- d. This outward manifestation will be judged by Christ. SEE: 2:16.

C. Paul as an Example to Them 2:17-3:21

1. Paul begins this section by discussing his own sacrificial spirit and his willingness to give himself for their sakes. SEE: Exodus 32:31, 32; 33:13-17; and Romans 9:1-3 where both Moses and he show the same spirit on behalf of the Jews. 2:17, 18
2. He then speaks of his coworkers and the value they have been to him. One of them is Timothy, who is like a son to him in the faith as well as his coworker, and the other is Epaphroditus, who apparently is from Philippi and is well known to them.
3. Paul always demonstrates a spirit of humility when he speaks of his coworkers, and gives them full credit for their faithfulness and value in the work. SEE: Romans 16. 2:19-30
4. Paul then shares his own testimony of salvation and how he lived his new life in Christ. 3:1-14

- a. He first warns them of evildoers of Jewish background who are seeking to lead them astray from the truth. 3:1-3
- 1) In other books, it is clear that many times these false teachers had come right into their assemblies and were seeking to work against their faith from within the assembly. SEE: Galatians 1; I Timothy 4:1-6; II Timothy 3:1-13; 4:1-3; II Peter 2:1-3.
 - 2) Here he indicates that these false teachers emphasized salvation through Law and sought to get them to combine faith with Law-keeping for salvation.
- b. He then turns to his own background in the Jewish faith and how he was not only a pure Jew, but he had been a pure Jew who was completely dedicated to following the Law of Moses and achieving his righteousness through it. He even states that he was “blameless” in meeting the requirements under the Law. 3:4-6
- c. He presents how, in being saved, he had had to put aside everything he had ever depended on for relationship with God (as garbage/refuse/waste) and find his righteousness through faith in Christ alone.
- d. He shows how, in his salvation, he had made it the priority of his life to know more about Him, to grow in Him and to be fully ready to meet him someday. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 1:20,21. 3:10-14
5. He then uses this testimony of salvation and life in Christ as an EXAMPLE for them to follow. He warns that there are many who are not living like he was teaching because of their seeking after the world and earthly things. 3:15-19
6. He closes this section by reminding them that their citizenship is in heaven, from where they are looking for the Savior (at His second coming, the Rapture) who will transform their bodies to conform to His own glorious body (in the resurrection of the dead). SEE: I Corinthians, chapter 15; I Thessalonians 4:13-17. 3:20, 21

D. Standing Firm in the Lord

4:1-9

- 1. No matter how strong they might be in the faith or how spiritual they might be at the time of the writing of this epistle, there is always the danger that they will not continue this way in the future.**
 - a. As was evidenced in the Corinthian church, a strong spiritual church can easily decline and become a church that has turned aside to the sins of the world and earns the displeasure of God. SEE: I Corinthians 3:1-4; chs. 1-16 (12 problems dealt with).**
 - b. The Ephesian church later became like that after starting out as very spiritual church that was missionary minded and an example to other churches. SEE: Revelations 2:1-7.**
- 2. In chapter 4, vs. 1, he gives them the command that they are to “stand fast (firm)” in the Lord.**
 - a. Standing fast (firm) in the Lord gives the idea in this passage of not just taking a doctrinal stand but also taking a stand in their daily lives in their walk with the Lord and in their walk before others. SEE: I Corinthians 15:58. A lifetime of standing firm.**
 - b. Without the clear doctrinal stand, our walk with the Lord has no meaning and our walk before others has no basis, BUT doctrine without EVIDENCE/PROOF of a relationship with the Lord is also without meaning as we live in this world. Our walk with the Lord and the example and testimony of our lives before others is the vital PROOF of what we believe.**
 - c. We note that this phrase, “stand fast (firm) in the Lord” is introduced with the word “THEREFORE” which always means that the new instruction is based on what he had just said.**
 - 1) He had just finished speaking of the walk we are to have in the Lord and the fact that our own citizenship is in heaven and that we are looking for His appearing. In other words, if this relationship with God and the assurance of our salvation and**

**place in heaven means anything at all, then “stand firm.”
Compare with the “therefore” in Romans 12:1, 2**

- 2) He also had said to them that many are not walking in such a walk that follows his own example and that their end is “destruction”. This is a warning that these Philippian believers are not to follow their example, but are to ”stand firm.”**
- 3. We note in this section that there are seven different words of instruction given them to help them take a firm stand in the Lord.**
 - a. “Be of the same mind in the Lord.” Vs. 3**
 - b. “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Vs. 4**
 - c. “Let your moderation (gentle spirit) be known to all men.” Vs. 5**
 - d. “Be careful for nothing (do not be anxious about anything).” Vs. 6**
 - e. “In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God...” Vs. 6**
 - f. “Think (dwell) on these things.” Vs. 8**
 - g. “Do (practice) these things.” Vs. 9**
- 4. If these instructions are followed, they will guard them and keep them from falling away from right relationship with the Lord, will bring a full experience of the blessing and favor of God and will guard them against a loss of their testimony before others.**
- 5. From our previous studies in Philippians, it is clear that the Philippians are very tender to all of his instruction and will strictly follow his advice in these areas of Christian walk and testimony. This attitude is in contrast to that of the Corinthians, Galatians and others.**

6. Further examination of the terms used in this list.

- a. “ONE MIND” (in perfect harmony) gives the idea of having no disagreements among them, but thinking the same thing, having the same goals and working together as though they were one heart and mind and life in Him.**
- b. “REJOICE” is not just an outward expression, but refers to the deep attitude of heart they are to have that causes them to be thankful and have joy even in the worst of circumstances. It is an attitude that is to control and characterize their whole lives.**
- c. “MODERATION” (“GENTLE SPIRIT”) refers to the way they are both to feel toward and treat other people, and also the way people are to regard them as representatives of Christ.**
- d. “BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING (“NOT FULL OF CARE”/NOT ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING”) refers to the fact that they are to have victory over fears and worries that would overwhelm them and cause them to despair.**
- e. “SUPPLICATION” refers to the earnestness and the intensity of their praying. It gives the idea of pleading with God for certain results to come.**
- f. “WITH THANKSGIVING” refers to the fact that even in the worst of circumstances there are reason to give thanks to the Lord as they pray.**
- g. “THINK” (“DWELL”) refers to their being controlled or dominated by pure and God-honoring thoughts and the shutting out of any thoughts that would take away from this.**
- h. “PRACTICE” simply means that they go out and DO the things they have been taught as they live their daily lives. This practice is to be consistent and ongoing. It is to characterize their lives.**

E. Their Part in the Contentment that Paul has in His Life and the Lessons Paul Has Learned About Contentment. 4:10-19

1. **The Philippians (and perhaps also the Thessalonians) were among the few churches responding to Paul's need of financial help and encouragement while he was in his first imprisonment in Rome. As Macedonians, they had a more tender and sacrificing spirit than churches like the Corinthian Church. SEE: II Corinthians 8:1-5, which is an example of their sacrificial spirit in giving to the needs of others.**

2. **As he noted in chapter 1, vs. 15, 17. some of the brethren had even been preaching against Paul with the intention of making his life in prison even more difficult to bear ("supposing to add to my affliction"). These "brethren" could not possibly have been from Philippi, but they could have represented Corinth.**

3. **Throughout this passage, Paul emphasizes that CONTENTMENT was something that he had both needed and experienced in all of the various difficult circumstances he had faced in his long ministry for the Lord. 4:11-13**
 - a. **As indicated in II Corinthians 4:7-12 and 11:22-33, Paul had gone through some of the worst possible persecutions and sufferings for the Name of Christ. He had also suffered lack (SEE: Philippians 4:12b) in many areas of life. He had persisted victoriously in all of these.**

 - b. **The key to his victory in all these circumstances was his close walk with the Lord, his dedication to the Lord to serve Him no matter where He might lead or what circumstances He might permit to come to Paul and the grace (sustaining strength) that the Lord constantly supplied to him in his life. SEE: II Corinthians 12:9, 10.**

4. **Though he had had victory over despair and defeat and had a spirit of contentment in all circumstances, the help and encouragement of these Philippians was used by God as a major factor in the victory he had experienced in the difficulties he had faced in that Roman prison. 4:10, 14-18**

5. **The Philippians had even sent one of their own workers, Epaphroditus, (chapter 2:25-30) to visit Paul in Rome, who**

not only carried their financial help but also apparently stayed for a time to comfort and encourage Paul. 4:18

III. THE CONCLUSION

4:20-23

- A. In vs. 20, Paul speaks of the final desire of his life and work, that everything that characterized his life and all that he did for the Lord would bring glory to God. Earlier, in chapter 1:20, 21, he had shared that his first priority and desire in his life was to live for Christ completely and represent Him in all his life and work. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14, 15.**
- B. In vs. 21, he speaks of the brethren who are with him there in Rome. Among them would be their own worker, Epaphroditus. It seems unlikely that these brethren he mentions are fellow prisoners. Rather, they seem to be people who regularly would come to visit him and minister to him.**
- C. In vs. 22, he speaks of those of Caesar's household sending greetings to them. He says they are "saints". This means that his witness had not only carried into the elite guard of the Emperor Caesar (SEE: 1:13), but he had also reached into the very family and staff of Caesar. Some believe from history that perhaps even the wife of Caesar had been won to the Lord by Paul during this imprisonment, either while he lived in his hired house (Acts 28:30, 31) or while he was actually inside the prison.**
- D. He closes the book with a benediction. As was true in his introduction to the book, (chapter 1, vs. 2), the word "GRACE" would refer to His strengthening grace rather than to his saving grace. In either case, it is "the unmerited/unearned favor of God bestowed on the totally undeserving" made possible through the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

OBSERVATIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

- A. Paul's own attitude in chapter 1, concerning both coworkers who may treat him badly and those who love and support him, is a good example for us today.**

1. **Failure in INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS with fellow workers and fellow believers is one of the major failures in the ministry today, both in the USA and on the mission fields of the world, and in church relationships today. SEE: Acts 15:36-40 (Barnabas and Mark); Galatians 2:11-21 (Peter) for Paul's own problems with this, though these relationships were later restored in the final years of Paul's life and ministry. SEE: Colossians 4:10; II Timothy 4:11; II Peter 3:15, 16.**

2. **We see a great victory in his life in that he does not seem to be filled with hatred and bitterness toward the criticizing brethren. Instead, he has a spirit of rejoicing about them (SEE: 1:18) when he considers that they are still preaching the Gospel and reaching the lost, even though they have a bad attitude toward him.**

- B. **Paul's attitude in regard to the circumstances God had permitted in his life, either for the good or the bad from a human standpoint, also points us to the attitudes we need to have today as we claim the promise of Romans 8:28-30 and live our lives in this world. We see this attitude both in chapter 1 and chapter 4 of Philippians. God does not promise us that we will have everything we WANT or that difficulties, problems, sorrows and other things will not be a part of our lives here on the earth.**

- C. **The example of Christ in chapter 2, vs. 4-11 is the most important example we can set before us as we follow Him in daily life.**
 1. **We note that he had often used Christ's example in his other epistles to lead the believers into right relationship with the Lord. SEE: Romans 15:1-8; Ephesians 4:32-5:2; 24-33. We see this also in the teaching of Christ Himself. SEE: John 13.**

 2. **The application of this would be that both Christians and non-Christians are often tempted to use the failures/faults of others as their excuse for not obeying God or following the Lord with all their hearts. The perfect example of the Lord reveals the importance of setting aside human examples and centering our attention upon the Lord Himself.**

- D. Paul's testimony in chapter 3, vs. 4-10, both of his life before he was saved ("blameless") and after his salvation ("I count them but dung/waste that I may win Christ...") gives also a clear picture of the failure of any works-based approach to salvation either by those who are keepers of the Mosaic Law or those who simply depend on their own good works to either save them or to help them keep their salvation. SEE: Romans 2:1-16.**
- E. Paul's repeated references to his own example before them emphasizes the vital importance of the Godly example Christian workers are to live and maintain before those they are either seeking to reach with the Gospel or are seeking to build up in the faith. It warns us of the uselessness of any work for God if such Godly example is lacking. Such failure would also be a reason for disqualification from the ministry. SEE: I Corinthians 9:27; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**
- F. The subject of "rejoice" in this book has special significance. Many believe and teach that this is the theme of the entire book. It is important to note that he uses this phrase during some of the most trying times he was going through. We see it used when he discussed the criticizing brethren in 1:14-18, when describing the circumstances of his imprisonment and other problems he had faced in life. Because of his long service for the Lord and the victories he has won in his life over the worst of circumstances, Paul would be a perfect example and the source of the greatest encouragement to those Philippians.**
- G. Paul's continued burden for and involvement in the work of God in spite of the circumstances of his imprisonment is also a good example for us today.**
- 1. We know from Acts 20:24 and Romans 15:18-28 that he desired to serve the Lord until his death and had strong vision for reaching far beyond anything he had ever done before for the Lord.**
 - 2. Even in his prison experiences, he was still spiritually deeply involved in the work he had established, with a burden for their growth and faithful walk and instructions for correction. He is convinced that the work of God will not fail.**

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

A. THE NATURE OF THE COLOSSIAN SITUATION

- 1. The town of Colosse was located to the east of Ephesus on a rocky ridge overlooking the valley of the Lycus River not far from the cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea.**
- 2. During the period of the Persian Wars in the fifth century B.C., Colossee had been a town of considerable importance. It was especially known for the glossy black wool of its farming regions. In Paul's day, however, it was decadent, although still a good sized city.**

B. THE FOUNDING OF THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH

- 1. It seems clear from Paul's testimony in Colossians, that Paul himself had never visited the city though he does strongly mention his intention to visit the area when he writes to Philemon.**
- 2. From the way Paul describes Epaphras (SEE:1:7; 4:12, 13) and the ministry that God had given him, it seems likely that Paul had sent Epaphras from Ephesus to reach Colosse with the Gospel. It is also possible that it was through Epaphras that the work in Hierapolis and Laodicea began. Dr. Tenney believes that Timothy might also have been a companion to Epaphras in this church planting work.**
- 3. Nevertheless, Paul still had a great burden for the work there and considered them under his authority as an apostle. He therefore writes to them just as strongly and authoritatively as he does to those whose churches he had actually established.**
- 4. It seems likely that the church there was established during the latter half of the third missionary journey of Paul and perhaps in the last year of his long ministry in Ephesus (55 A.D.). This would allow for the winning and training of Epaphras to carry out this evangelistic work.**

C. THE NATURE OF THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH

- 1. There are many things in the book that seem to commend these believers in their faith and walk with the Lord, but there are also some serious issues that are dealt with that needed correction. One of these involved a heresy that seemed attractive to them but that could have undermined their faith and led them completely away from the foundational truths of the Gospel.**
- 2. This heresy in Colosse arose because of the peculiar nature of the people of the city. The Colossians were Phrygian Gentiles (1:27) whose religious characteristics involved approaches that were highly emotional and mystical. This left them open to teachings that appealed to these characteristics in them.**
- 3. The Colossian believers, with such a nature, had a sincere desire to obtain in their lives the “fullness of God”, and when teachers came among them with a philosophy that promised a “fullness of God” based upon a mystical approach, they were attracted to these teachings.**
- 4. The philosophy they were tempted to embrace involved voluntary humiliation (2:18, 20, 21), the worship of angels (who may have been portrayed as intermediaries between God and man), abstinence from certain foods and drinks and the strict observance of feasts and ceremonial days (2:16).**
- 5. It is also likely that all of these teachings were tied to Jewish legalism as they were influenced by the strong teaching of the Jewish population of that region. Paul’s references to ceremonialism (2:11) and to the implication that the ceremonies and feasts they were to follow were a shadow of things to come speaks more of the influence of Judaism than of heathenism.**
- 6. The Colossian heresy therefore was just as serious as the Galatian heresy. The Galatian heresy centered around the place of the Law in gaining and maintaining salvation before God, while the Colossian heresy was centered in a departure from the true Person and Work of Christ and the substitute of other things in His place.**

7. In meeting the needs of these believers and their temptation to stray from the truth, Paul emphasizes that Christ Himself was to be preeminent in them and that all other philosophies, ceremonies and other substitutes were to be rejected and set aside as false.

D. PURPOSES AND THEMES OF COLOSSIANS

1. There are two main theological themes emphasized in Colossians.
 - a. The Person of Christ is the main theological theme of the first two chapters. It is clear in these chapters that He is the Divine Son of God and that this is one of the main foundations for our faith. This is especially found in Colossians 1:14-22, and the subject continues in chapter 2. This compares also with the teaching of John, chapters 5-10, where the Lord Himself emphasized the same truth. Clear teaching and the straightening out of any errors on their part concerning this subject, both on the theological and the practical sides, seems to be the main purpose for the writing of this book.
 - b. The subject of redemption through Christ is the other main theological theme of Colossians. This theme is found especially in the first two chapters, but is also referred to throughout.
2. Colossians also emphasizes practical themes in the Christian life.
 - a. In applying the main teaching of the theological section of the book, it is emphasized that Christians are to concentrate on heavenly things, with special emphasis upon the Lord Himself, rather than upon the things and attractions of the world. SEE: 3:1-4. This would not only exclude from their lives the fleshly temptations of the world, but it would also exclude the philosophies and ideas of the world that had attracted them before.
 - b. Another important practical theme is that they are to put aside things that detract from the new life they have in the Lord and they are to put on spiritual qualities that are in conformity with all that they now have in the Lord. SEE: 3:5-17.

- c. There is also the theme of the relationships they have in life as they live in this world. This begins with family relationships and then includes the slave-master relationship as well. The spiritual responsibilities of these relationships are emphasized. SEE: 3:18-4:1.
- d. The final theme is the daily conduct of their lives as they live in this world. SEE: 4:2-6.

E. OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

HOLDING A WORTHY FAITH AND WALK BEFORE THE LORD.

- I. INTRODUCTION** **1:1, 2**
- II. THE TRUE WORTHY FAITH AND WALK** **1:3-4:6**
 - A. The Foundations of a True Worthy Faith.** **1:3-2:23**
 - 1. Paul’s Respect for Them in Their Present Faith and Walk.** **1:3-8**
 - 2. Paul’s Prayer for Their Ongoing Faith and Walk** **1:9-12**
 - 3. The Essential Foundations of a True Worthy Faith.** **1:12-2:3**
 - a. The Person and Work of Christ** **1:12-22**
 - b. The Firmness of their Faith and Stand** **1:23-2:3**
 - B. The Dangers They Face in Faith and Walk** **2:4-3:9**
 - 1. Following False Teaching That Leads Them Away From the Truth Concerning Christ.** **2:4-15**
 - 2. Following Legalism That Leads Them Away From Devotion to Christ as Their “HEAD”.** **2:16-23**
 - 3. Following Worldly/Fleshly Things Rather Than Heavenly/Eternal Things in Their Lives.** **3:1-9**

C. The Manner/Conduct of a True Worthy Walk	3:10-4:6
1. The Putting On of Spiritual Qualities	3:10-17
2. The Spiritual Approach to Relationships	3:18-4:1
3. The Daily Spiritual Walk Before God and Man	4:2-6
III. CONCLUSION	4:7-18
A. Paul Introduces His Fellow Workers	4:7-14
B. Paul Gives Final Greetings to Area Churches	4:15, 16
C. Paul Gives an Admonition to a Worker	4:17
D. Paul's Farewell	4:18

STUDY OF THE TEXT OF COLOSSIANS

HOLDING A WORTHY FAITH AND WALK BEFORE THE LORD

I. INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 1:1,2

- A. As he had declared to the Ephesians in this same set of epistles, Paul again asserts his authority and right to share the Truth with them as an "APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST BY THE WILL OF GOD." 1:1a**
- 1. Paul had never visited this church and was not directly involved in evangelizing in that area when the Church of Colosse was organized. As far as we can tell, that work of evangelizing and church establishing had been carried out by Epaphras (SEE: Colossians 1:7, 8) who was probably a convert of Paul's ministry and who had received his training under Paul in Ephesus.**

- a. **The Colossians had undoubtedly heard of Paul, but this lack of personal acquaintance with him might cause some to wonder about his right to speak the Word of God with such Divine authority and finality.**
 - b. **They might also be aware that Paul had not actually been with the Lord during His earthly ministry and was not one of the original disciples the Lord had called and trained for the work of the Gospel. His right to call himself by that special title, APOSTLE, might also be a problem**
2. **Paul is therefore asserting in this introduction that the teachings of this epistle have come from God and were given to him as one whom God had both chosen and to whom he had also given all the rights and authority of an APOSTLE.**
 3. **Therefore, the entire teachings of this epistle are totally without error or the ideas of man, but have come from God Himself and are to absolutely accepted, believed and followed.**
 4. **Knowing the true source of his teachings would also give them the basis for resisting the teachings of false teachers who might come seeking to lead them away from the Truth of God.**
- B. As we also note in his introduction to the Epistle to the Philippians, Timothy is with him at this time. 1:1b**
1. **We note that Timothy, although he was already a believer and follower of the Lord when Paul began his second missionary journey in Lystra, was brought into the ministry under Paul (SEE: Acts 16:1-3) and was trained by Paul, as one from the next generation, to be a future leader in the work of God. SEE: I and II Timothy.**
 2. **From the beginning of Paul's ministry in Europe, more and more responsibilities were given to Timothy to prepare him for the time when Paul would be gone, and then two of Paul's epistles were directed to him, teaching him how he was to conduct and guard himself in these responsibilities.**

3. We note that Paul treats him like a son and especially wants him to be with him during his second and final imprisonment. SEE: II Timothy 4:9-11, 21.
 4. Timothy was based in Asia and so came from there to be with Paul.
- C. THE ADDRESSEES are called the “saints and faithful brethren in Christ.”** 1:2a
1. From this introduction of these brethren, it seems that he is dealing with them as those who may lack vital knowledge of some of the Truth they need to understand in taking a stand for the Lord, but he is not dealing with them as those who are openly disobedient to the Truth.
 2. His approach, therefore, is different from the way he had had to deal with the Corinthians who were treated only as those “CALLED TO BE saints.” (SEE: I Corinthians 1:2). In the case of the Corinthians, they had had all the teaching they needed, under several outstanding teachers, and knew God’s will for them both as to their faith and conduct, but they were not living obediently as “saints,” and had to be dealt with strongly in twelve different areas of their disobedience.
 3. These believers in Colossee, in spite of the faithful ministry of Epaphras among them, knew all of the basics of the Christian faith but had apparently lacked the strong teaching that would help them grow in “the grace and knowledge” of the Lord and take a strong stand for the Lord. SEE: II Peter 3:18. This epistle will supply that strong teaching.
- D. THE BLESSING that he shares with them is basically the same as the one he had used in both Ephesians and Philippians, “GRACE BE UNTO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.” This same blessing is also in many of his other epistles in his introductions to those epistles. SEE: Romans 1:7, I Corinthians 1:3; etc.** 1:2b

II. THE TRUE WORTHY FAITH AND WALK. 1:3-4:6

A. THE FOUNDATIONS OF A TRUE WORTHY FAITH 1:3-2:23

1. Paul's Respect For Them in Their Present Faith and Walk. 1:3-8

a. Paul's commendation of the Colossians compares with the ones he had given to the Romans, Philippians and Thessalonians.

1) He had written to the Thessalonians many years before in 52 A.D. (SEE: I Thessalonians 1:2, 3, 6-10), when their work had just been established early in his 2nd missionary journey and they were facing strong tests of their faith. Their strong stand for the faith and the example they set in their love for the Lord and their zeal for the spreading of the Gospel was a testimony to many other groups of believers.

2) In writing to the Romans in 56 A.D. (SEE: Romans 1:8), he commends believers who had had far less teaching than most of the others to whom he addresses his epistles, and yet they had a strong faith and their faith was a testimony everywhere. The news of this faith had reached Paul over in Asia and perhaps was the main reason why he was so burdened to visit them.

3) He had just written to the Philippians in this set of Prison Epistles, written in about 61 A.D., and spoke warmly of them throughout his epistle. We see this especially in chapters 1 and 4. Of all of the churches, they had remained the most loyal and sympathetic to his needs in his imprisonment. Their help included financial assistance and also the sending of messengers to him.

b. The love of these Colossians for the Lord and their stand for the faith seems especially remarkable in the light of the fact that he himself had never visited them, and there also is no evidence that they had ever had visits from any other strong teachers and leaders such as Peter and John and others.

c. He is strongly burdened to PRAY for them in their present situation (SEE: 1:3), and will address this burden of his in 1:9-12

where he specifies the areas where they have the greatest need for his prayers.

- d. In his commendation of them, he especially mentions their **FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE**. **SEE: Colossians 1:4-8**. We note that these three things were mentioned together in I Corinthians 13:12, where it is taught that tongues, prophecy and knowledge will pass away during that time, but that these three things will continue throughout the church age.
 - 1) The **FAITH** he speaks of is not just the set of doctrines that they hold, but has to do with their strong trust of the Lord both in His His salvation and in their daily walk with Him. **SEE: 1:4a**.
 - 2) The **LOVE** he speaks of is their love for other Christians and the results of that love in their fellowship together as a body of believers. **SEE: 1:4b**.
 - 3) The **HOPE** he speaks of is their hope for the future life in heaven with the Lord that was given to them when they heard and trusted the Gospel that was preached to them. **SEE: 1:5, 6**.
- e. This glowing report has come to Paul from Epaphras who also has ministered among them on Paul's behalf.

2. Paul's Prayer For Their Ongoing Faith and Walk 1:9-13

- a. This is one of many times in Paul's epistles where he shares with the readers the burden that he has on his heart for them as he **PRAYS** constantly to the Lord on their behalf. Except for the second prayer in Ephesians, these prayers are usually in the first chapter of each epistle. **SEE: Romans 1:8-10; Ephesians 1:15-19-23; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:3,4, 9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; I Thessalonians 1:2-4; II Thessalonians 1:3, 11, 12; II Timothy 1:3, 4; Philemon, vs. 4, 5-7**.
- b. In each epistle, the contents of the prayers offered to God differ according to the needs of the people to whom he is writing. Very often the things he prays for in each prayer will introduce them to

the teachings he will proceed to give them in the following sections of that epistle.

- 1) In Ephesians, for instance, the prayer in chapter 1:15-19-23 deals with the salvation that he will discuss in chapters 2 and 3. His prayer at the end of Ephesians, chapter 3, vs. 14-21, will introduce the teachings of chapters 4 to 6 on the subject of the Christian life.
 - 2) In Philippians, the prayer in Philippians 1:3, 4, 9-11 is directed toward their continued growth in their knowledge and discernment of the Truth, and for their discernment and faithfulness in following the Lord.
- c. In this prayer in Colossians 1:9-12, the emphasis and main theme of the prayer is found in vs. 9 where he says that he prays that **“YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.”** Everything that follows in this prayer is built upon this theme.
- 1) This introduction to the prayer could mainly be dealing with the false teaching that they are facing and that some in their assembly may be tempted to follow. Unless all false teaching is dealt with and they hold fast only to the Truth, then nothing else is possible in their Christian lives. Vs. 10 would seem to support the idea that this is the first emphasis of the prayer, where he emphasizes walking worthy of the Lord and increasing in the **KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**. The balance of chapter 1 and the entire second chapter of Colossians also seems to be emphasizing this, where the foundations of their faith are reviewed with emphasis on the Person and Work of Christ.
 - 2) We notice that the rest of the prayer is emphasizing the **CONDUCT** of their lives, both before God and others.
 - a) While it is important to guard themselves in what teaching they follow, their daily **WALK** in salvation is to be pleasing and acceptable to God. This will be the main emphasis of chapters three and four of Colossians.

- b) **Following the Truth faithfully and without compromise is important, but it is not a substitute for also living lives that are pleasing and acceptable to God.**
- d. **We note the contents of his prayer concerning the CONDUCT of their daily walk before God and others.**

1) “Walk WORTHY of the Lord unto all pleasing.” 1:10a

- a) **The term “WORTHY” is used in many different passages in the New Testament. SEE: Matthew 10:37; Romans 16:2; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:10a; I Thessalonians 2:12.**
- b) **The emphasis and meaning of this term is that we will, in our walk, meet the spiritual standard that is required to properly represent and bring full honor to the Lord in the daily conduct of our lives so that we fully win His approval and blessing upon our lives. Anything less than this is not worthy of Him.**
- c) **In Matthew 10:37, the Lord Himself emphasized making Him our highest priority in life as a basis for a worthy walk in the world.**

**2) “Being FRUITFUL in every good work.” 1:10b
SEE: John 15:1-3-6; Galatians 5:22, 23.**

- a) **The term “FRUITFUL” can refer to the accomplishing of God’s purposes in our daily labor for Him by bringing others to the saving knowledge of the Lord or helping other Christians to grow in the Lord.**
- b) **Some believe that this term as used here may also apply to having the “FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” manifested in our lives as we live for Him in our daily lives. In salvation our lives have been changed as the Holy Spirit indwells our lives and this will result in our lives manifesting this spiritual fruit of LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, ETC.**
- c) **It is also possible that this could refer to manifesting the One who has saved us from our sins by our conduct in daily life.**

- 3) **“INCREASING in the knowledge of God.”** 1:10c
- a) **This part of the prayer is included in other prayers that Paul prays for the believers in the churches to which he writes. We see this in Ephesians 1:17, 18 and Philippians 1:9.**
 - b) **Whether the increase has to do with the basic facts of salvation itself or the deeper things of the Christian life we live after we are saved, our knowledge of God is to continually increase.**
 - c) **Increasing in the knowledge of the Truth will also protect us from false teaching. Satan is a clever enemy and is skillful in leading astray those who are poorly taught in the Truth.**
- 4) **“STRENGTHENED with all might according to His glorious power.”** 1:11a
- a) **This strengthening may have to do with being strengthened by the indwelling Holy Spirit against the daily temptations we face so that we do not fall prey to the sins that these temptations can bring into our lives. This means that we would have daily victory in our lives. SEE: Romans, chapter 8; Galatians 5:16.**
 - b) **This strengthening can also have to do with the POWER that we need in any witness of the Gospel and in work for God among other believers. The Lord emphasized this aspect of the Spirit’s power in Acts 1:8 as the disciples prepared to be His spokesmen for the Gospel.**
- 5) **“Unto all PATIENCE AND LONGSUFFERING.”** 1:11b
- a) **The idea of this phrase is PERSEVERENCE. It emphasizes going on without faltering or quitting in these things for which he is praying.**
 - b) **If the other things are present in their lives they will be PROTECTED against faltering or quitting and will continue faithfully for the Lord in their relationship with Him.**
- 6) **“JOYFULLY GIVING THANKS to the Father...”** 1:11c-13

- a) **This subject of living joyous THANKFUL lives is also one that is dealt with in other passages, whether Paul is giving thanks for a certain circumstance or people to whom he is writing, or he is commanding them to have thankful spirits. SEE: Philippians 1:18; 4:6, 7; I Thessalonians 1:2; 5:18; II Thessalonians 1:3**
- b) **This emphasizes that, no matter what our circumstances might be or how difficult life might seem to us, there is always reason to give thanks. This will protect us from a complaining spirit in life.**
- c) **In this passage the THANKS to the Father is first centered in the fact that God has chosen to qualify us/make us eligible for His salvation and its full benefits and results through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is due to His GRACE. SEE: Ephesians 1:7. The verses that follow will explain how He worked to make that possible.**
- d) **Second, the THANKS to the Father is due Him because He has delivered us from the power/domain/kingdom of darkness (Satan and sin) and has brought us into the kingdom of His dear Son. SEE: Romans 1:18-3:18 and 3:19-5:21; Ephesians 2:1-3 and 2:4-10.**

3. The Essential Foundations of a True Worthy Faith 1:14-2:3

a. The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ 1:14-22

- 1) **We note that this had also been discussed under the title “BLESSINGS” in Ephesians 1:3-14. In that passage, the emphasis is upon the Truth that everything involved in our salvation depends entirely upon Who He is and What He has done. Without His Person and Work being the foundation for our faith, there could be no salvation.**
- 2) **In this passage, Colossians 1:14-22, His important place in our salvation is also emphasized, but he goes beyond that to include, in the heart of this passage, the work of Christ also in the creation and sustaining of the world itself. This compares with John 1:1-3 and Hebrews 1:2-13. The purpose of including this creating and sustaining work of Christ seems to be for the purpose of validating that He has the power, authority and ability to be our**

Savior as well as having completed all the WORK that He needed to do on our behalf to bring us salvation.

3) The Truths concerning the Person and Work of Christ.

- a) Our redemption and the forgiving of our sins comes through HIS BLOOD. We note that this is also the wording of Ephesians 1:7, where the GRACE of God makes it possible. SEE: Leviticus 17:11; I John 1:7. Literally, we are cleansed by His blood from our sins. It was not just His death that was necessary, but it was the pouring out of His blood as a sacrifice that was needed. 1:14**
 - b) He is also perfect God, having all the characteristics of God. When we see Him, born into this world, we see God manifested in the flesh. 1:15**
 - c) He was also the creator and sustainer of the world, and the world that He created exists for His glory and honor. SEE: John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2-13. 1:16**
 - d) He has an eternal nature and everything depends on Him. 1:17**
 - e) He is the rightful head/ruler over His Church (the entire body of believers of every nation and tongue and from all ages, and deserves the place of honor, respect and obedience that this authority merits. 1:18**
 - f) The Father has chosen to give Him the place of prominence so that our salvation and our eternal relationship with God might be completely centered in Him. 1:19, 20**
 - g) He has delivered us from our former alienation from God in our lost sinful condition to bring us into His salvation, with the GOAL of that salvation being that we should live before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach. 1:21, 22**
- b. The Firmness of Their Faith and Stand in Him 1:23-2:3**
- 1) The means of reaching that goal of living a holy and blameless life before Him depends upon their continuing in the faith in a firm**

and steadfast manner, not moved away from all that the Gospel in which they have trusted has brought into their lives. 1:23

- 2) Paul's entire ministry has been devoted not only to helping them find that faith in the Lord but also to helping them take this firm stand in that faith so that their lives and walk before Him are all that they should be. 1:24-29**
 - a) Paul rejoices in the sufferings that he has gone through for the sake of those who would become part of the Body of Christ just as the Lord Himself suffered to make their salvation possible. This is his whole purpose in life. 1:24**
 - b) God Himself has given him this special ministry of sharing God's Truth in the glorious MYSTERY which has not been fully revealed or understood in ages past but now has been fully revealed and is Paul's special responsibility. 1:25, 26**
 - c) The heart of the MYSTERY that he is proclaiming is: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This "mystery" could only be fully revealed when the work of Christ in salvation was finished and the Gospel was ready to be proclaimed. 1:27**
 - d) Paul works unceasingly at this task to reach as many as possible with this Truth so that they may stand perfect/complete, both in salvation and also in their walk before Him. He does this work through God's working in Him (the Holy Spirit). 1:28, 29**
- 3) Many have not yet actually seen him in the flesh, but have heard it through those he has sent. Having shared this MYSTERY with them, Paul now has a deep burden that they will act upon its full Truth and experience all that it brings to them. 2:1-3**
 - a) COMFORT/ENCOURAGEMENT. They need this from the Lord to go on for Him without despair or failure.**
 - b) KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE. This would refer to their relationship and labor together with other believers. SEE: Ephesians 4:1-3; 4:32-5:2; Philippians 2:1-4-8**

- 6) John, in the Epistle of I John, deals extensively with the subject of false teaching, especially as it has to do with the Person and Work of Christ. SEE: I John 4:1-6, 15; 5:1, 5, 6, 11-13, 20. Some were not only denying His Deity and the work that He had accomplished on our behalf, but they were even denying that He had truly come into the world. SEE: 4:2, 3.**
- b. One of the first things the false teachers seek to do is to destroy the true picture of the Person and Work of Christ by changing the Truth so that it conforms to their false teaching. They do not always deny it completely, but, in order to deceive and win followers, they make it appear that they are teaching the Truth when in fact they have changed it so that it is no longer the Truth. They may even use the same terminology that is essential in believing the Truth, but that terminology is given different definitions as they use it.**
- c. In this passage:**
- 1) He opens by commending them for their stand for the faith and the stability of that faith, but with the warning that they are to discipline themselves and be firmly rooted in the truth so that no one can lead them astray. 2:4-7**
- a) The key verse in this passage is in vs. 6, where they are exhorted to be absolutely unchanging in the beliefs that they had when Christ first came into their lives, and that both their beliefs and their walk in the world are to reflect this.**
- b) There is also the emphasis upon the idea of GROWTH in their stand for the Truth so that their knowledge of the Truth continually grows stronger and stronger. SEE: II Peter 3:18. This growth will keep them from growing astray.**
- 2) He then examines the basis for false teaching. It is based on human philosophy and ideas rather than having any spiritual foundations at all. SEE: I Corinthians 2:4-9. It is taught by men who have no understanding at all of the Truth. 2:8**

3) He then examines the Truth about Christ that is the basis for their faith, and, without any change or compromise, is to be their only foundation for faith and walk. 2:9-15

a) He is completely God in every sense of the word. Even in His humanity, He never ceased to be God. 2:9

b) They have also been completely identified with Him and have no spiritual foundation apart from Him. 2:10-12

c) It is through all that He has done for them that their spiritual standing before God in Him is possible. If any of His work can be denied by anyone, then they have no salvation. 2:13-15

2. Following Legalism That Leads Them Away From Devotion to Christ As Their “HEAD.” 2:16-23

a. There are many ways that they can be robbed/defrauded of all that has come to pass in their lives through their relationship with Christ. LEGALISM is one of them. This is a deceptive approach.

1) Rather than simply following standards of righteousness and holiness in the Christian life, and following the Truth in a simple spiritual way, LEGALISM lays down extensive sets of rules for their lives that supposedly would make them more spiritual.

2) In that day (as well as today), many Christians were being taught to approach their Christian lives and walk with the Lord in that way. This robbed them of their joy and victory in their new life in Christ and replaced it with cold obedience to these sets of rules. Since they so strictly follow these rules, they wonder why their lives are so empty and devoid of spiritual blessing from God.

b. Most of the teaching included in this LEGALISM came from the hundreds of rules laid down in the Law of Moses. These not only included the rules for daily life on this earth but also the strict observance of festivals taught in the Law.

c. For the Christian, the alternative is concentration on the Lord Himself, their “HEAD,” who meets the deepest needs in their lives.

3. Following Worldly/Fleshly Things Rather Than Heavenly Things.

3:1-11

- a. When a person comes into relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation, his life is changed and he now has the new spiritual nature in him.**
 - 1) Before he was saved (SEE: Ephesians 2;1-3), he belonged to the realm of the family of Satan and his life was concentrated in that realm.**
 - 2) In his new life in Christ, however, that has been changed and he no longer belongs to the realm and family of Satan. He now belongs to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- b. This spiritual change in his life and status before God also demands a change in his focus and in the choices that he makes in life.**
 - 1) He is no longer to have the world of the flesh and the Devil as the center of his attention and walk, but now is to turn his attention to heavenly things related to God Himself.**
 - 2) This change of focus/attention/action is God's deep desire for every believer but is a choice that they themselves must make.**
- c. It is not only a contradiction in a person's life for him to continue to focus on the world of the flesh and the Devil after coming into relationship with Christ, but it also denies him the joy of daily walk with the Lord and the future he will share with the Lord.**
- d. They are therefore first to fully "SET THEIR MINDS" (vs. 2) on things above, "CONSIDER" (vs. 5) the full reality of their new relationship and "LAY ASIDE" (vs. 8, 9) the things of the world and the flesh that had filled their lives before they were saved.**
- e. This makes it possible for them to fully "PUT ON" every aspect of their new life in Christ. This will cause Christ, in their lives, to occupy the place He deserves and to be and do in them everything he wants to be and do.**

in our hearts, then we will be bound together in unity with other believers in that love and nothing can break that bond. 3:14

- d. “And let the PEACE of God rule in your hearts..” SEE: John 15:27; Philippians 4:6, 7. We note that this is often Paul’s fervent wish for them as he opens his epistles to the various churches. We not only have PEACE WITH GOD in salvation (Romans 5:1), but, by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22), we also have the daily PEACE OF GOD bringing us freedom from worry and fear. 3:15a**
- e. “And be ye THANKFUL.” SEE: Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:18. Having a thankful spirit in all circumstances is one of the marks of a true Christian. No matter how difficult life might be (SEE: Philippians 4:11-13), God will always help us to have a spirit of thankfulness. 3:15b**
- f. “And let the WORD OF CHRIST dwell in you richly, (with all wisdom) teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” He seems to be speaking of all the teaching that the Lord Himself had given and even the entire Word of God. SEE: Psalms 119 where the Psalmist makes the Word of God the center of his life. The emphasis here seems to be on our dwelling in/constantly meditating on the Word of Christ so that it produces in us a joyful spirit in our daily lives. 3:16**
- g. “Do all in the NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” He is the center of our lives, we owe everything to Him, He is the one we represent and it is in His Name we preach the Truth. Therefore, everything we do is to be done in HIS NAME. 3:17**

2. The Spiritual Approach to Relationships 3:18-4:1

- a. The relationships between husbands and wives. SEE: I Corinthians 7:10-17; Ephesians 5:22-33; I Peter 3:1-6. 3:18, 19**

- 1) **This is a subject that Paul has dealt with extensively in at least two other epistles, placing equal responsibility upon both the husbands and wives in marriage relationships.**
 - 2) **Though their roles are different in their relationships, both husbands and wives are to carry out their full responsibilities to keep unity and harmony in their marriage relationships and to maintain the testimony of their homes before outsiders.**
- b. The relationship between fathers and children. SEE: Proverbs, chapters 1-8; Ephesians 6: 20, 21. 3:20, 21**
- 1) **Though the father, in all of these passages, is clearly the one in authority over the child he is training, he has the responsibility both of firmly training the child in the Truth (SEE: Proverbs, chapters 1-8) and of conducting this training in the proper way so that the child is not driven away or embittered by it.**
 - 2) **The training is therefore to be done in love and with the good of the child, rather than simply the exercise of his authority, being his chief goal. This will help ensure a willingness in the heart of the child to respond to the training and a close relationship between parent and child.**
- c. The relationship between slaves and masters. SEE: Ephesians 6:5-9; I Peter 2:18. 3:22-4:1**
- 1) **It seems clear from chapter 4:1, that both the slaves and the masters he refers to are believers. Though this is true, there would be cases where the masters might not have changed in their mindset towards their slaves after conversion, and might have continued to treat them as harshly as they did before they were saved, following the pattern of other slave owners.**
 - 2) **No matter what sort of treatment they might receive from these believing masters, slaves are to still completely devote themselves to the work they are given to do, doing it spiritually and as to the Lord Himself. Even under terrible circumstances, there would never be an excuse for them to do otherwise, and they would be**

to be gentle, non-offensive and spiritual in nature so that it promotes peace and right relationships with others. As Christians, our speech, if dedicated to the Lord, is Spirit-controlled. 4:6

III. CONCLUSION

4:7-18

A. Paul Introduces His Fellow Workers

4:7-14

- 1. TYCHICUS. SEE: Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; II Timothy 4:12. We do not know when he might have been converted, but when Paul mentions him in these three passages, he is a fellow worker of Paul's who is very loyal to Paul. We first hear of him in Acts 20:4 when Paul is about to return to Jerusalem but wants to meet the Ephesian elders in Miletus. He accompanied Paul there and may have gone with Paul to Jerusalem as well. In Ephesians and Colossians, he has visited Paul in Rome and is the messenger and companion of Onesimus that Paul will use to deliver the Epistles of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. It may also have been his task to help Philemon spiritually adjust to the return of Onesimus, the run away slave. 4:7, 8**
- 2. ONESIMUS. SEE: Philemon. He was a run away slave of a Christian church leader named Philemon, who had apparently wronged his master by stealing property before he ran away and fled to Rome. In Rome, he was converted under the ministry of Paul and now is being sent back to his master to make things right. Paul could have kept him there in Rome, but it was spiritually necessary for him to be sent back. 4:9**
- 3. ARISTARCHUS. SEE: Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Philemon, vs. 24. He was from Thessalonica, and is first mentioned in Acts 19 as one the mobs seized when they were demonstrating against Paul after he had been converted under Paul's ministry. By Acts, chapter 20, he was a co-worker of Paul's and accompanied Paul to Miletus with others. He also seems to have gone with Paul to Jerusalem, was probably also seized and imprisoned there and was probably a prisoner of the Romans as he was taken on the same ship with Paul when he is mentioned in Acts 27:2. In Colossians 4:10, Paul speaks of him as a fellow-prisoner. 4:10a**

4. **MARK. SEE: Acts 12:12; 13:5, 13; 15:35-39; II Timothy 4:11.**
Mark seems to refer to himself as the young man who fled from the soldiers when they came to take the Lord prisoner in Mark 14:51, 52. Mark, as the nephew of Barnabas, had a troubled relationship with Paul and was the cause of a quarrel and breakup between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15. Later, however, he and Paul were reconciled, and, in II Timothy 4:11, Paul wants him to come to Rome with Timothy because he is “useful/valuable” to Paul. In this passage in Colossians, chapter 4, written at least four years before II Timothy, Paul urges the Colossians to welcome him. 4:10b

5. **JUSTUS. We know nothing about him except that Paul identifies him as a Jew (“of the circumcision”), Paul says that he, and the two he had just named, had been an encouragement to him in his imprisonment. He must have been one of Paul’s converts known to them and possibly was also a coworker. 4 :11**

6. **EPAPHRAS. SEE: Colossians 1;7. He had been apparently converted under Paul in Ephesus and later was sent as the evangelist of Paul to reach the Colossians with the Gospel. Until that time, Paul himself had never been there. When Paul was in Rome, Epaphras came there to be with Paul. Paul seems to be suggesting (4:13) that Epaphras had also reached Hieropolis and Laodicea. As Paul testifies, Epaphras has a deep burden for the believers in all three cities for their growth in the Lord. 4:12, 13**

7. **LUKE. He is not only the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, but he was also Paul’s companion on two or more of his missionary journeys. Frequently, from Acts 13-20, we see the term “WE” used, where Luke indicates that he participated in that particular happening. We know that he was a doctor and perhaps that was his main aid to Paul. At the time of the writing of Colossians, Luke is in Rome with Paul. 4:14a**

8. **DEMAS. SEE: Philemon, vs. 24; II Timothy 4:20. At the time of the writing of Colossians and Philemon in 61 A.D., Demas seemed to be a faithful companion of Paul’s in Rome. However, when Paul is imprisoned the second time in Rome in 65 A.D., Demas seemed to**

have betrayed Paul's trust by forsaking him, "having loved this present world." Paul needed him, and His departure under worldly circumstances left Paul disappointed and lonely. 4:14b

B. Paul Gives Final Greetings to Churches in the Area 4:15, 16

1. Three times LAODICEA (SEE: Revelation 3:14-22) is mentioned in these two verses indicating that there was a well established church there. We are not sure where Nymphus had his church, but greetings are also to be given to that church.
2. Paul also indicates that he had written a separate letter to the church in Laodicea that Paul wants them to share with the Colossians. We know nothing of this letter in history, and God did not choose to bring it to light so that it would be part of the inspired New Testament. Paul does not mention his messenger Tychicus carrying that letter to the Laodiceans, so we do not know when it was written.

C. Paul Gives An Admonition to a Worker 4:17

1. ARCHIPPUS was not with Paul in Rome but, according to Philemon, vs. 2, was in Colossee. He perhaps was in the same church as Philemon.
2. From Paul's reference to him as a "fellow soldier" in Philemon, vs. 2, it would seem that Paul is not writing critically about him as though there had been some great failure in him. Rather, Paul simply seems to be reminding him of his responsibilities before God and is admonishing him to fully carry them out. It might even be that he is a new worker and is comparatively untested in the work.

D. Paul's Farewell 4:18

1. Paul's eyesight was not good. His books were actually written, as he dictated them, by others. However, at the end of several of his books (SEE: I Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11; II Thessalonians 3:17; Philemon, vs. 19), he personally signs them. 4:18a
2. He closes with a brief benediction.. "Grace be with you." 4:18b

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

A. BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

- 1. Philemon lived in the area of Colosse. Like many Christians, it seems that he was a slave owner. It is not clear if he treated his slaves badly and would have needed the strong warning that Paul gave to the Christian slave owners (SEE: Ephesians 6:9), or whether Onesimus was more like a servant than a slave to him. Was it possible that it was because of cruel treatment that Onesimus had run away?**

- 2. The epistle to Philemon was written at the same time and under the same circumstances as the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians and the Colossians.**
 - a. Paul was in prison in Rome. For the first two years of this imprisonment he was permitted to stay in a hired house (SEE: Acts 28:30, 31) but then was put in a prison cell for the next two years until he was finally released.**

 - b. It was from this prison cell that he wrote the four books of the Prison Epistles.**

 - c. During the time of this imprisonment he was permitted to see people freely and it was some of these visitors who carried his epistles to the churches to whom they were addressed.**

- 3. It is not clear from the Epistle to Philemon if Paul had actually met Philemon before the writing of this epistle. It seems most likely that Paul had heard of him through Epaphras his evangelist, knew of his reputation as a dedicated Christian (SEE: vs. 4-7) and then became more intensely involved in his life when his runaway slave, Onesimus, was converted through Paul in Rome.**

B. THE OCCASION FOR THE WRITING OF PHILEMON.

- 1. The circumstances seem to be that Onesimus had stolen property from Philemon and then had run away and had gone to Rome. It**

was there that he somehow came in contact with Paul and was converted.

2. When Onesimus was converted, the question would be whether or not he should return to his master, and perhaps suffer terrible consequences for his action, or whether he would simply remain in Rome as a free person. The decision was that, no matter what the consequences might be for his wrong, he was to return to his master to make right what he had done.
3. Paul's purpose in writing is to appeal to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus so that this former slave would not be treated badly but instead would be received as a fellow believer in the Lord.

THE OUTLINE FOR PAUL'S EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

- I. THE BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION Vs. 1-7
 - A. THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP THEY SHARE Vs. 1-3
 - B. THE FELLOWSHIP AND CLOSE BOND OF THIS RELATIONSHIP Vs. 4-7
- II. THE EXPECTED FAVOR FOR ONESIMUS OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION BASED ON THIS RELATIONSHIP Vs. 8-22
- III. FAREWELL FROM A FAMILY MEMBER Vs. 23-25

STUDY OF THE TEXT OF PHILEMON

CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

I. The Basis For Christian Forgiveness and Reconciliation Vs. 1-7

A. The Family Relationship They Share Vs. 1-3

- 1. While it is true that unsaved people often seem to manifest some of the qualities God desires in us even more than some Christians, true forgiveness and reconciliation is basically spiritual in nature and is best seen in those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, are in right daily relationship with Him and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.**
- 2 Paul's appeal to Philemon is based upon this relationship they both have with the Lord in salvation, and on Paul's assumption that he is writing to a truly spiritual man who will respond to his appeal spiritually. It seems likely that Paul had never personally met him but has known of him through Epaphras who is now with Paul in Rome, and so Paul feels spiritually close to Philemon.**
- 3. The fact that the runaway slave Onesimus is now a believer and a member of the same spiritual family makes it essential for Philemon to spiritually heed the appeal that Paul is now making without compromise.**
- 4. The fact that Paul also addresses those in the church in the house of Philemon also makes his obedience to Paul's appeal that much more compelling. They would be witnesses to any action he takes.**
- 5. Paul then shares with Philemon the blessing of Grace and Peace that he also uses in most of his epistles to the churches.**

B. The Fellowship and Close Bond of This Relationship Vs. 4-7

- 1. By reminding Philemon of the reputation and testimony he has maintained, with the expectation that he will not be willing in any way to lose that testimony by any action he might take, Paul also**

uses this reminder as a support for the appeal he will make and to cause Philemon to be willing to sacrifice his own desires and natural motivations in this matter.

2. Paul stresses his personal respect for Philemon and the encouragement that this testimony has been to him, being assured that Philemon would not want to lose that respect and high regard of Paul for him and would be willing to make any sacrifice to maintain it.

II. The Expected Favor For Onesimus of Forgiveness And Reconciliation Based On This Relationship

Vs. 8-21

- A. The appeal that Paul makes in this section would be easy to ignore if it is not stated very strongly.

1. Humanly speaking, Onesimus still has the position of a SLAVE in his relationship with Philemon, and that relationship would have to be radically changed if Philemon is going to respond to Paul's appeal. This might cause Philemon to feel that it would set a bad example for others on the human level if he were to treat this slave any differently than he would any others.

2. Also, Onesimus has wronged Philemon in some way before his escape (taking stolen property?), and, humanly speaking, deserves to be punished for what he has done. That would have to be completely set aside by Philemon. A Christian employer today would have the same problem in dealing with some wrong that an employee has committed against him, even though that person might have become a Christian since committing that offense.

B. Paul's Right to Order Philemon to Do What is Right

Vs. 8

1. As an Apostle and also as one whose concern for those in that area caused him to send Epaphras to evangelize them and begin the church, Paul felt that he had the right simply to order Philemon to grant forgiveness and reconciliation to Onesimus.

2. That approach might have brought "obedience" but caused resentment and bitterness in the heart of Philemon because it

would not have been based on a strictly spiritual approach with a spiritual response that would leave peace in Philemon's heart about the whole matter. Paul decided against this approach.

B. Paul's Tender Appeal to Philemon

Vs. 9-11

- 1. Paul first appeals on the basis of his age in comparison with Philemon, and then the imprisonment and suffering he is going through for the sake of the Lord. In other words, he is asking sympathy and understanding from Philemon.**
- 2. As he will later point out, in these circumstances of age and imprisonment, it was a sacrifice for him to send Onesimus back to Philemon and yet he has taken that step.**
- 3. He also appeals on the basis of the relationship that he personally has with Onesimus himself. Onesimus is his child in the faith, personally led to the Lord by Paul, so he is very precious to Paul and should be treated by Philemon with that in mind.**

C. Paul's Return of Onesimus Though He Needs His Help

Vs. 12-14

- 1. As mentioned before, Paul is stating that he really needed for Onesimus to stay there with him, but he was willing to make the sacrifice of his own personal needs and desires in order to do what was right.**
- 2. He also did not want Philemon to respond on the basis of Paul's rights/needs out of compulsion, but rather for Philemon to be spiritually willing to receive Onesimus in the right way and to establish the right relationship with him of his own free will.**

D. Paul's Appeal For a New Status For Onesimus

Vs. 15, 16

- 1. Paul takes a bold step by asking that not only will Philemon receive Onesimus back, but that his very status in his relationship with Philemon would be radically changed, and that this change would be a permanent one. Forgiveness and a resumption of their former slave-master relationship with all that that would mean would no longer be satisfactory or acceptable.**

2. The change that is to take place is that Onesimus would no longer, in any way, be considered as a slave, but now would be treated as a brother in the Lord, in every way equal with Philemon in the Lord both physically and spiritually. SEE: Ephesians 2:11-22 for the way the Jews were to treat the Gentiles in their new relationship in Christ.

**E. Paul's Appeal On the Basis of His Relationship
With Philemon**

Vs. 17-21

1. In the light of the relationship that Paul has with Philemon in the Lord, in the light of Paul's position as an Apostle and leader, and finally in the light of all that Philemon spiritually owes to Paul, Paul appeals to him.
2. Philemon cannot ignore the basis of this appeal, for it would mean that he is rejecting Paul himself through any hesitation or disobedience on his part.
3. The most famous phrase in this passage is: "CHARGE THAT TO MY ACCOUNT." SEE: vs. 18. As many have pointed out, it is a perfect picture of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf.
4. This section closes as Paul reminds Philemon that whatever he does for Onesimus is like he is serving Paul himself.

F. Paul's Confidence in the Obedience of Philemon

Vs. 21, 22

1. Paul asserts that he has no doubt that Philemon will faithfully follow what he has suggested.
2. Paul believes also that this whole matter will increase his standing and acceptability with Philemon and looks forward to future hospitality in the home of Philemon.

III. Farewell From a Family Member. Paul closes this epistle by first speaking of some of his coworkers who are with him in Rome (Epaphras, Aristarchus, Mark, Demas and Luke) who join him in sending loving greetings to Philemon, and then wishing again for the blessing of God to be with Philemon. Vs. 23-25

STUDIES IN THE PRISON EPISTLES

TEXTBOOK FOR THE COURSE: There will be no textbook for the course other than the Word of God itself and the study materials prepared by the teacher himself for distribution to the students.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

- 1. Several sessions at the beginning of the course will be spent in studying the background of the writing of these epistles, including the background of the Apostle Paul, the study of his missionary journeys, the circumstances leading to the work of evangelism in each of the cities, the establishing of the churches in each city and the spiritual nature of the Christians in each of the churches.**
- 2. One session will be spent in the study of the outline of each epistle, with emphasis upon the main theme of each book, its main divisions and the purposes for which each epistle was written.**
- 3. Most of the remaining sessions will be spent on a verse by verse study of the text of each of the books, section by section, following closely the outlines that have been discussed.**
- 4. The course will close with a brief review of the lessons Christians today can learn and apply to their own lives from the study of each epistle.**

GOALS

- 1. The main goal of the course is to gain a correct understanding of the purpose and teaching of each of these epistles.**
- 2. Another purpose for the course is to understand why and how these epistles can be used to teach Christians today. This means that the student will be helped to understand their complete relevance and importance both for Churches and for individuals today.**

3. **When taught on the Bible College or Seminary level, the course also has the purpose of preparing the students to use the text of each of the epistles for preaching and teaching.**

REQUIREMENTS

1. **CLASS ATTENDANCE** with strict attention to the teaching of the epistles as the student follows the text in his own Bible and integrates the text of the epistles with the teaching being given in class sessions.
2. **THE READING** of the entire text of each epistle three times during the course, and the reading of the section of text being studied each day at least once in preparation for the class that day.
3. **In addition to the notes handed out by the teacher, each student is required to take careful notes of each class session. These will be graded at the end of the course.**
4. **Except when this course is being taught in a brief module form, there will be a weekly quiz covering the sessions of class study that week. The results of these quizzes will figure into the final grade each student will receive.**
5. **At the end of the course, a final exam will be given covering the entire teaching for the course. This exam will constitute 80% of the final grade the student receives for the course. The nature of the final exam will be described in the final regular class period.**

RESOURCES

1. **It is recommended that each student utilize a Bible Concordance to reference additional and parallel texts that may deal with the same subject, person or circumstances mentioned in the text of the epistles being studied.**
2. **Though only the King James version of the Bible is used in class sessions, students may also consult other versions of the Bible in their outside preparation for the class sessions.**

