



PT Butler

Bible Study Notebooks

Study of EPHESIANS

prepared by P. T. Butler Th.D

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These Bible study notes are provided for your use in the preparation of teaching the holy scriptures. They were meticulously prepared over many years to serve the Kingdom of God and aid in the growth of Christians of any age. Please use them in combination with prayer and diligence to promote the clear and honest declaration of God's word.

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TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler Th.D

Ephesians 1:1-23

The book of Ephesians is “the book of the Church.” We Christians ought to know it better than we do. The ancient Ephesians (today’s Turkey) were worshipers of Diana to whom they had erected a great temple, one of the seven architectural wonders of the ancient world. The city of Ephesus was the seat of an oriental cult. The temple of Diana became an international banking business as well as a source of employment for silversmiths who made small images of Diana to sell to worshipers of the “goddess.” Diana’s statue was made of a great meteorite -stone said to have “fallen from the gods.” “Diana” was grotesquely represented with turreted head and many breasts. Romans named the Greek “Artemis” by the name Diana. She was represented as a virgin huntress and was widely worshiped (Acts 19:27). Her silver “shrines” (Acts 19:24-35) were little “temples” containing an image of Artemis as imagined by the people of Asia Minor. Artemis was a combination of the Greek virgin goddess with the many breasted and lewd Semitic (today Iraq) moon goddess Ashtoreth. For the Ephesians, Artemis (or Diana) was the nursing mother of gods, men, animals and plants, and was the patroness of the sexual instinct. Her images, instead of being artistically beautiful like those of the Greeks, were ugly, more like the lascivious images of modern India. The priestesses of Diana were nothing more than prostitutes, selling themselves to the many travelers and “business” men coming to the seaport of Ephesus to “bank” the results of their trading throughout the Roman empire.

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians from the place of his incarceration by the Romans A.D. 61-63. It is one of the four “Prison Epistles”—the others are Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Three of these were written at the same time and carried by the same messengers (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7-9, and Philemon 10). Paul had founded the church at Ephesus and its welfare concerned him very deeply. His first visit there, A.D. 54, had been very brief because he had to be in Jerusalem by a certain date to fulfill a vow (Acts 18:19-21). Later, he had spent three years of intensive service there (Acts 19:8-10; 20:31). Now Paul writes to remind the believers that in the church of Christ they had a spiritual temple infinitely more glorious than the temple of stone erected to Diana of the Ephesians.

The book of Ephesians speaks directly to the issue of “building” the church of Christ. Chapter 1 begins with a dissertation on the deity of Jesus Christ. This is foundational. The church cannot be built, either numerically or spiritually on any other base. To build the church we must make believers in the deity of Jesus Christ. That is the ONE essential of the Christian faith—THE DEITY OF JESUS (see John 5:1-47; Col. 1:25-20; 2 John 7-11, etc.). His deity is his authority! I think I remember that the great Restoration Movement evangelist, Walter Scott, wrote of Jesus of Nazareth, “His Messiahship is founded on historical evidence—his authority is founded on his Messiahship.” Without evidence to

confirm his claims to deity he has no more authority to reveal the infinite will of God the Creator, or to demand obedience to his own commandments, than you or I have. Did Jesus claim deity—did he claim to be divine? One cannot read the Gospel of John without admitting he claimed deity. He claimed, in fact, to be God! Did he prove his claim? Indeed He did—many times over by fulfilling prophecies made thousands of years before his birth, by his miracles and by his own prophecies. Ultimately his deity is established by his resurrection from the dead (see 1 Cor. 15:1-58, etc.). Do you want to add members to the church? Do you want to strengthen weak members? THEN TEACH PEOPLE THE DEITY OF JESUS—TEACH IT CLEARLY WITH EVIDENCE AND CONSTANTLY!!

The deity of Jesus secures for believers everything for which the honest (see Lk. 8:15) human heart yearns. First of all, Paul says Jesus has blessed believers with EVERY spiritual blessing. Now that word “every” is absolutely inclusive! There’s not one “spiritual blessing” lacking in the repertoire of Jesus Christ. Paul uses the Greek word eulogesas. It is an “aorist” participle meaning every blessing had already been accomplished and dispensed at some point in time. These “blessings” are not in the future. They are spiritual (Greek pneumatike) blessings NOW! God never sent his Son to institute a church where carnal, earthly things are primary. Only spiritual blessings will endure for eternity—and they are seen only by faith. These-earthly things are only temporary (both “good” and “bad” carnal things—2 Cor. 4:16-18). Both “good” and “bad” these-earthly things are all going to be dissolved one day, even the earth and the cosmos itself (2 Pet. 3:10-11) so that God may “create a new heavens and a new earth.” Honest human beings long for higher blessings than those of this-flesh—no matter how many unbelievers declare the “flesh” is man’s highest aspiration. Everyone wants love, honor, guiltlessness, satisfaction, eternal life. These are “spiritual blessings.” But few want to suffer the loss of “creature comforts” to receive from God the blessings of endurance, character, and hope (see Rom. 5:1-5). Spiritual blessings are enumerated in 2 Pet. 1:3-11. Almighty God wants to give human beings, his favorites of creation, the highest of his blessings which are spiritual blessings. And God has already done so in Christ who is Deity; Christ secured them (i.e., earned them) for man by becoming Man, perfect man. Christ deposited these highest, spiritual blessings in his church. No one can have every spiritual blessing unless he/she becomes a functioning “member” of the body of Christ—his church! “Spiritual” does not necessarily mean a person must have an emotional experience to be “spiritual” or have a “spiritual blessing.” Forgiveness is a spiritual blessing. It may make you become emotional when you understand from your obedience to the commandments of Christ and his apostles in the NT that you have forgiveness, but your emotions have nothing whatsoever to do with any of the spiritual blessings belonging to you! They belong to you because Christ acquired them for you by his death and resurrection. They belong to you because he says so in God’s word! You may have them if you simply believe and become a member of his body the church by repenting, being baptized and functioning as Christ’s disciple is told to function in the New Testament. The church is what Christ built. The church is what Christ purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28). The church (Christians) is the dwelling place of God and Christ in the Spirit (Eph. 2:21-22). The church is the place where Christ has deposited his Word and it is only his Word that is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified (Acts. 20:32).

The “heavenly places” are not the future “heaven” as we think of eternal life after death on this earth. “Heavenly places” is a translation of the Greek word *epouraniois*. There are other variations of this Greek word in John 3:12 where Jesus is trying to teach Nicodemus about the “heavenly” thing which he calls a “new birth”; Hebrews 8:5; 9:23 where Paul calls the OT tabernacle a “shadow” of the “heavenly” place. The tabernacle was a “shadow” or type of the whole realm where God dwells which includes the church on earth and heaven where the angels dwell now and the saints who have gone on; Hebrews 3:1 says that Christians living on earth have a “heavenly calling”; Hebrews 6:4 says Christians on earth have “tasted of the heavenly gift”; Ephesians 2:6 says Christians on earth are notified that God has “raised” them up and “made” them to “sit” (Greek aorist verbs meaning something done in past time) with Christ in the “heavenly places.” Ephesians 3:10 indicates that the church on earth was (and still is) to make known the gospel to rulers and authorities “in the heavenly places” and finally, the defining text (Hebrews 12:22) states that the church on earth is the “heavenly Jerusalem.” So, while the church is on earth, it is not “of” the earth—it is heavenly. The church (Christians) is the temple of God where he now dwells (Eph. 2:19-22) and where two or three Christians are gathered together in Christ’s name, there he will be in their midst. So, you see, Christians dwell right now in “the heavenly places” and Christians are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places” right now! But Christians are also connected to that other “heaven” which is just a heart beat, a breath away, over in the next life—the door to which is the death of the body. When we’re gone from our body, we’re at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1-10). While on earth Christians are engaged in a “heavenly war” (Eph. 6:10ff; 2 Cor. 10:3-5, etc.) so they need “all the spiritual blessings” God has for them. There are no spiritual blessings for any human being outside the church! Every human being is, one way or another, looking for a higher, spiritual, heavenly “place.” Most of humanity is trying to create such a place for themselves out of what the flesh offers. But such a place never satisfies the human spirit. God made man, ultimately, for the spiritual.

Anakephalaiousasthai is a huge Greek aorist-middle verb translated “unite” in Ephesians 1:10. It means, literally, “to bring down under one head,” hence, “to unite.” God gave Christ as the “stewardship” (or dispensation or administration or authority) of the fulness of the times. In other words, Christ was God’s plan or dispensation of the fulness of all the times. God “summed up” all things he had planned at the beginning of creation in Jesus Christ (see Col. 1:15-20). This is referring to Christ’s first coming (his incarnation). There are no more “times” to be fulfilled for this earth! The next coming of Christ will usher in timelessness—eternity, the “new heavens and new earth. So, we are in the last days, the last times, NOW (see 1 Cor. 10:11)! God dispenses all the grace he shall ever dispense in time, NOW, in Christ and in the church of Christ. God has united everything that was ever disunited, NOW, IN CHRIST, IN THE CHURCH, “not only in this age, but also in that (agelessness) which is to come” (see Eph. 1:20-23). In Christ Christians (his church) are united to God from whom they alienated themselves, and united to one another, and united to all of God’s creation (the present creation and the future new creation). The disharmony, frustration, fragmentation, lostness, and alienation which humankind brought upon itself by sinning against God is dispelled in Christ and the church. The reintegration of the creature is accomplished by the Creator. Man is made whole, perfected, suited to fulfill his divine

destiny, tuned, stabilized, and completed in Christ and the church—AND NOWHERE ELSE!
 Union with God is available only by being in Christ and his in his church.

God destined us (Greek *proorisas*, an aorist verb, something already done) or predestined us in Christ. The Greek word is from a root word meaning “horizon.” Literally the Greek would read, God “pre-horizoned” us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ. He “foresaw” as Luke uses the word to describe David’s divinely-given-ability to prophesy Acts 2:25. God “foresaw” (saw ahead of time, predicted and ordained beforehand) that we should become his reconciled children through or in Jesus Christ. In other words, what was predestined was the Agent or Person by whom we become reconciled to him—Jesus Christ was that “AGENT.” It was really Jesus Christ who was “predestined” and we are “predestined” only when we make a choice, of our own volition, to be “in” Christ. These verses in Ephesians do not teach Calvinistic “predestination” or “irresistible grace.” They simply mean that God determined before the world was created, the horizons, or “lines-within-which,” human beings might be accepted as sons—and that was in Christ. We are “in” Christ by our own choice—by the exercise of faith—and not against our will. Freedom of the human will is taught constantly and consistently throughout the Bible, from Adam and Eve to the churches of Asia Minor in Revelation. Christ stands at the door and knocks on human hearts (Rev. 3:20)—he does not force himself upon anyone. The Bible narrative from Genesis to Revelation would be nonsense if human beings were either saved or condemned without ever having made a moral, volitional choice to believe or disbelieve. In 1:5 the Greek word *hiothesian* is translated, “adoption” and literally means “setting, putting, standing in the position of a son” or “having the standing of a son” (see Rom. 8:15,23; Gal. 4:5). What is so special about being declared “a son of God”? It is the ultimate in personal identity! If God recognizes you as his child, what other recognition do you need—you are a child of the “King of kings and Lord of lords!” What does a loving father do for any one of his children? Let me tell you! If he truly loves he will do anything in his power to make all his children mature, joyful, productive, secure and respected. The Christian’s “standing as an heir” by “adoption” is that for which the Heavenly Father “predestined IN CHRIST” every willing, repenting, believing, obedient human being. But, as the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) depicts, there are those like the “elder brother” who are unwilling “to come to the party” God is holding for the “few” willing to come in! Those who wish to have the standing of an heir must be willing to get up from where they are, either eating with the hogs or crabbing in self-righteousness, and attend the party! God “predestined us in and by Christ’s redemptive work TO LIVE FOR THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY! This is our destiny. The RSV moves the translation of the Greek word *eklerothemen*, from v. 11 to v. 12 and translates it “we...have been...appointed to live for the praise of his glory.” The Greek verb is indicative, aorist, passive, and more correctly translated in v. 11, in the ASV, “we were made a heritage...(and then the ASV continues in v. 12)...to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory.” In other words, the ASV is saying that Christians have something done to them (passive), i.e., when they become Christians they “are made” for Christ’s inheritance. This text is not talking about the Christian’s inheritance—only that they are Christ’s inheritance (see Heb. 2:13)! The Christian’s destiny or “appointment” (assignment) is to “live for the praise of his (Christ’s) glory.” We are to praise Christ’s “weightiness,” (Gr. *doxes*), authority, power, love, and grace. That is what all of those in heaven do NOW! (Rev. 5:12, etc.). There’s only one

way to do that—when we do something good and valuable in the world for any one, we must let people know, audibly, orally, that we are Christians, and why we are Christians!

Every spiritual blessing God has for a believer is deposited “in Christ” and “in the church.” And in addition, God has identified Christians with his seal as being those who have all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places.. Forgiveness is one of the “spiritual blessings” found only by being “in Christ and in his church.” The book of Hebrews is unequivocal that forgiveness for sin cannot be found anywhere else! God gives this blessing according to the good pleasure of his will, and according to the praise of the glory of his grace, i.e., God forgives us according to WHO and WHAT he is, not according to what we are. He does not begrudge forgiving us, even though it cost him the ultimate price. God enjoys being able to forgive us—it was his “GOOD PLEASURE” TO DO SO. Another of our spiritual blessings is that God has made known to us his “secret” redemptive plan through Incarnated Deity, Jesus Christ! God’s gracious, free, redemption (with all the spiritual blessings that go along with it) is knowable to all humans who have a will to desire it, the information that reveals it, and a mind to think or reason. He has made it known historically, and propositionally (i.e., verbally) by having the facts about it written down in human language in a book called, The Bible! It does not have to be guessed at, or felt! It is neither irrational nor irresistible. The “I.D.” or God’s identification seal impressed within and upon the Christian is his Holy Spirit of promise. The Greek phrase is---esphragisthete to pneumatī tes epaggelias to agio, literally, “sealed with the spirit, the one of promise, the holy one.” In ancient times when a king put his seal upon a document, he did it by impressing his signet ring which bore his image in wax to indicate his approval, his ownership, his authentication. Behind that “image” imprinted on a document was the FULL WEIGHT of the king’s person, character, and authority. Just so, God imprints upon our being (character) his divine nature (his Holy Spirit). This is how God has authenticated to the rest of the world that a Christian belongs to him. His Holy Spirit bears the full weight of God Almighty’s authority and faithfulness. Being “sealed” with God’s Spirit does not mean we fall down and kick our legs, or jump up and shout, or run around and jerk, or speak in “unknown” tongues” (the word “unknown” nowhere in the Bible texts refers to “tongues”). Jesus and John were both “filled with the Holy Spirit” and did none of these weird things.

Alexander Campbell wrote in his book, *The Christian System*, Standard Publishing Co. (undated) p. 91 “When these facts are understood (the facts of the Gospels) or brought into immediate contact with the mind of man, as a moral seal...delineate the image of God (read God’s Holy Spirit) upon the human soul. All the means of grace are, therefore, only the means of impressing this seal (read Holy Spirit) upon the heart,... bringing these moral facts to make their full impression on the soul of man. Testimony and faith are but the channel through which these facts, or the hand of God, draws the image (read Holy Spirit) on the heart and character of man.”

Campbell never, never held for a moment that God irresistibly forced his “image” or Holy Spirit upon the heart of any human being as in “predestinarian Calvinism.” How then did Campbell think the Holy Spirit (the image of God) was “impressed” upon the human soul?

He wrote that God's "facts" (all the facts of God's historically recorded system of redemption, i.e., the Gospel) are "moral facts" and are "testified" to (in the Bible), which produces in honest minded people "faith" in God and Jesus Christ, which produces "the feeling" of being "saved" or "born again." A person's new birth must proceed in that order—FACT, TESTIMONY, FAITH, FEELING. As Campbell put it, "No testimony, no faith." One does not have an authentic "feeling" of being saved until one knows the facts, accepts and obeys the testimony about those facts, believes and lives out in one's life the promises of those facts. THAT is how one knows one is sealed with the Holy Spirit. God "predestined" us to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29). We are "changed into his (Christ's) likeness from one degree of glory to another" when we "behold the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18) and that "beholding" can only be done through accepting, believing and obeying the "facts" of the "testimony" in the Bible. We "become partakers of his (God's) divine nature (read, Holy Spirit)" only through the "precious and very great promises" God has granted us in the "knowledge of him (Christ) (2 Pet. 1:3-4). His "precious and very great promises" are available only in the Bible (all "bold" emphases are PTB's). If God's word says we receive his Holy Spirit when we believe, repent and are baptized, we trust God and that settles it. We don't need any other "experience" to know it!

One of our many "spiritual blessings in the heavenly places" is a spirit of WISDOM (not merely knowledge of facts, certainly not just a "feeling"). Many human beings have been venerated as "wise" but were only educated "fools." Only Christians have the wisdom that comes from Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of life and all the elements of the cosmos. The wisdom that comes from God as a gift is given only when a human being has full and exact knowledge (discernment) for that is what the Greek word *epignosei* in 1:17 means. The prepositional prefix *epi* (lit. "over, above, beyond, etc.") is on there to expand the root word *gnose*—we get the English transliteration *gnosis* and Gnostic from this word which means "to know, or have knowledge." God has given the world the opportunity to have this "wisdom" or full and exact knowledge by revealing it in the Person, Jesus Christ. The Greek word "revelation" here in Eph. 1:17 is the same word used in the title of the last book of the Bible—*apokalypseos*, or *apocalypse* as we would transliterate it in English. It means "an uncovering, a telling of something that was never known before." And that is how God "gives" us this *pneuma sophias*, or "spirit of wisdom." He does it by "revealing it." We don't "discover" it or have it innately! What God tells us, we would never have known had he not made it known to us! And God makes it known to us in Christ (and in the Bible—the repository of God's testimony, about Christ). Outside of Christ this wisdom is unavailable. Man has to surrender, humbly and obediently to the authority of Christ and God, or he will not let God tell him anything. When humans are willing to let God tell (reveal) them what they do not and can never know on their own, only then will they have a spirit of wisdom by a full and exact knowledge of Christ. The very idea of "revelation" "goes against the grain" of human pride and arrogance. Remember Eve and Adam and the old Serpent and his subtle, but oh, so, beguiling words, "Did God say.....?" I paraphrase what Satan said to Eve,—“Who needs God to tell him what to do, Eve, look at the ‘tree’ and judge for yourself whether you should eat of it or not!” How does this “God” get off telling anyone what to do? You’re smart enough to know what you ought to do. If you don’t know it Eve, it can’t be known!” (see 2 Cor. 11:3). No—we do not get our “wisdom” through some present day miraculous

revelation. All those claiming to receive extra-Biblical (other than what's in the Bible) revelations from God today are at best, scripturally illiterate, or charlatans, or, in a worst-case-scenario, "false prophets"! And if you don't think it's dangerous to be a "false prophet" just take your Bible and read everything said about "false-prophets" in it! The Bible, which is divinely-guided testimony focusing on God's Anointed (the Messiah) and God's program of human redemption, is God's complete and final word for this world! God has nothing more to say about Christ, mankind, and redemption until he says it at the final Judgment Day! JESUS CHRIST (and the N.T. scriptures) was the ULTIMATE revelation for this world because he was God-incarnated, God-in-human-flesh. To claim further, extra-Biblical revelations is to mock the supremacy of Jesus Christ, the apostolic claims for divine guidance, and mock God as Someone who "can't get it right the first time" but has to continually "update" his "incomplete" revelation! IF YOU WANT WISDOM FROM GOD, IT'S RIGHT THERE UNDER YOUR NOSE (Rom. 10:1-21) IN YOUR BIBLE—READ IT, BELIEVE IT, AND DO IT, AND BE WISE!

In Ephesians 1:19, the immeasurable greatness (Greek, *huperballon megethos dunameos*, lit. "thrown-beyond mega-ness of dy-no-mite") in us, is the same "great might" God accomplished (Greek, *energeian*, aorist verb meaning God already did it) when he worked out the redemption of creation (including human redemption) through all the centuries leading up to and including the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the victory of the early church over the Roman Empire and Satan! It includes all the power manifested by God from Genesis to Revelation! The most magnificent of all was when God "raised Jesus from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places (even dwelling in the church today), far above all rule and authority and power and dominion...not only in this age (now, the Christian dispensation), but also in that which is to come! The immeasurable greatness and energy of God's power in us, is the power of REGENERATION. It is the power to give human beings a "new birth." It is the power to "create and recreate." It is the power God exercised when by merely speaking words, he created this cosmos and all life that exists in it! It is the power to make that which is from that which is not! It is the power to raise human beings from the dust of the earth after they have physically died. It is the power to overcome the seduction of the devil, the power to focus the mind, heart, will, and life on goodness, truth, and holiness.

This power is not from within us. It does not originate in us or by us. It is a power from outside of us that is imputed into us by the grace of Christ. It is the love of Christ for us that controls us (2 Cor. 5:14). It is like a powerful magnet—more powerful than anyone can imagine—drawing our bodies, souls, and spirits to a new perspective. It is the power of faith when that faith is anchored in God and Jesus Christ. Not just faith, but faith tied to and wholly resting in Christ (see Phil. 3:10). The Greek word *energeken* is used in 1:20 and is translated wrought in both KJV and ASV, translated accomplished in RSV and exerted in NIV. We get the English words, "energized, powered" from *energeken*). It might be best translated, operated, activated, energized. God operates in Christ. Christ was the center and circumference of God's redemptive sphere of activity! Christ was with God at the creation of the cosmos and man (John 1:1-18; Heb. 1:1-2; Col. 1:15-20, etc.). The Son was

active with the Father in all the work in the Old Testament; Christ came to sinful earthlings and worked out their redemption and did so, proving he did it by arising from the dead; Christ was with the church giving her victory over her adversaries (the world, the flesh, and the devil) through Acts to Revelation; Christ is active in the church today, this very moment. THERE IS NO OTHER REDEEMPTIVE SPHERE OF ACTIVITY BESIDES “IN CHRIST AND IN HIS CHURCH!” God pressed the “regenerative-power-ON” button at the resurrection of Christ (Phil. 3:10-11). That is when Jesus Christ was declared by God to be enthroned as his (monogenes “only-one-of-a-kind” John 1:18) ruling Son (see Acts 2:22-36; 13:33-39; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; Matt. 28:18-20, etc.). NO RESURRECTION OF CHRIST—NO POWER! Religious man with an un-resurrected Jesus is bereft of God’s power. Man not surrendered to the enthroned, all-authoritative Christ, is powerless before the devil.

“God has placed everything under the power of Christ and has set him up as head of everything for the church. For the church is his body, and in that body lives fully the one who fills the whole wide universe.” Ephesians 1:22-23 in *The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips, pub. Geoffrey Bles, London, 1960, p.402. The church is Christ’s body—Christ is the head of that body. He rules in every aspect of the church. There is nothing in the church to be ruled by human beings—humans only serve and implement the clear commandments of Christ. Believers really have no authority over one another; they are simply to lead one another, or point one another, by teaching and living, to Christ the head over all things for the church. The church is the “fulness of Christ who fills all in all.” There is no part of Christ outside the church! No believer can have Christ without the church! Those who talk about a “vital and real Christianity apart from the established church” are not talking as the Scriptures talk!! Robert G. Shannon writes in his book, *1000 Windows* (a book of sermon illustrations): “The building committee had met to look at some designs for a new house of worship. One member objected to some of the concepts. ‘Let’s build a church that looks like a church,’ he said. Whatever your tastes in architecture for the building, spiritually the church should look like a church. To put it better, the church should look like Christ. If the church is Christ’s body, it ought to resemble him in its compassion, its love and sympathy, its holiness.”

Christ is King over a kingdom. That “kingdom” is the church which began on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2, ca. A.D. 30. The church and the kingdom as referred to by the OT prophets and the Gospels and Epistles of the NT are ONE AND THE SAME! The church/kingdom is built upon the identity of Christ (Matt. 16:13-28). Christ’s eternal kingdom is the only kingdom that will exist in the next life. The only other situation to exist in the next life is Hell—the eternal prison-house. Those who wish to join the eternal freedom in the kingdom of Jesus Christ must “confess” (Greek *homolego*, “say the same as...”) i.e. that Jesus of Nazareth is God’s Anointed (Messiah/Christ) and that Jesus was God incarnated (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10; 2 John 7-11). Those who wish to become members of Christ’s body, the church/kingdom, must admit that they cannot work out their own redemption but must rely on (trust, have faith in) the redemptive work of Christ which he imputes to a believing, penitent sinner by his grace. His vicarious atonement on the cross and his bodily resurrection from the dead and his ascension to the right hand of God and his

headship over the church is that redemptive work of grace. The church absolutely cannot be built any other way. The church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:20-22). It is in Christ that the “whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.” Whatever the New Testament says is necessary for sinners to do to “be in Christ” is what God has decreed to be the prerequisites for membership in the eternal kingdom of Christ. Paul is teaching in Ephesians, chapter one that everything that relates to the kingdom is found “IN CHRIST.”

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prepared by Paul T. Butler

EPHESIANS 2:1-22

There is nothing that will make people realize a sense of gratitude, loyalty, and need to respond, better than an act of grace toward them. Just give a gift freely to an honest, humble minded person and then try to keep them from reciprocating! It can't be done! Soooo, if we want to motivate people to become members of Christ's church, or even motivate members to evangelize, we dare not neglect the doctrine of the grace of God in the completed work of Christ. **AND I BELIEVE A "WHOLE LOTTA" PREACHING AND EVANGELIZING TODAY IS NOT FOCUSED ON CHRIST'S UNDESERVED GRACE FOR DOOMED SINNERS.** Instead too much Christian teaching is copy-cat, modern "psycho-babble" which concentrates on human schemes to build "self-esteem." Don't you see? Unmerited grace puts to death "self-esteem" in the humble acceptance of servitude to an Ultimate Master—Jesus Christ, who, himself, counted not equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself and took the form of a servant—even unto death on a cross (Phil. 2:5-11). The apostle Paul, a.k.a., Saul the smug, self-righteous, very religious Pharisee, even after being called to apostleship for Christ, **LEARNED** that God's grace through Christ **WAS ALL SUFFICIENT FOR HIM.** Listen to Paul: "And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' (DID YOU GET THAT? **GOD'S POWER IS MADE PERFECT** {i.e., brought to it's goal, intention, objective, purpose} **IN WEAKNESS**). Paul continues: "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:7-10). There's no arguing with an apostle —we are only "strong" in God's way of thinking (and revealing) when we are "self-weak." The strength that comes from God is death to "self-esteem." Grace is one of the main themes of the apostolic preaching in the first century (see Acts 13:43; 14:3,26; 15:11,40; 18:27; 20:24,32). Grace is a constant doctrine taught in the epistles—it is in every epistle of the NT except 1 & 2 John. Grace is even in James, the epistle which strongly emphasizes Christian works! Paul appeals to Christians to yield themselves as servants of righteousness on the basis of the grace of God (read Romans 5:1 through 6:23). He urged the Roman Christians to build the church on the basis of the mercy (i.e., grace) of God (see Romans 12:1-21). Paul turned over the Ephesian elders "to God and the word of his grace, which would be able to build them up" (see Acts 20:32). The church cannot be built by coddling, compromising, or chicanery. It can only be built by believing, preaching and teaching that all human beings are sinners who may be redeemed by God's GRACE which he has extended vicariously through Jesus Christ of Nazareth when "sinners" are willing to humble themselves to obey God's commandments.

Man in rebellion, by his own choice, hostile and hating God, is separated (DEAD) from God. The destiny of any and all human beings not “spiritually alive in God through Christ” is eternal death! An Almighty God, to preserve his sovereignty, his faithfulness, and his righteousness, must pronounce eternal damnation for the first and slightest disobedience of his creatures (note what God did to disobedient angels, 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). God did not create man a sinner. Every human capable of knowing right from wrong (and EVERY human being is eventually capable since everyone has a conscience that judges him when he does right or wrong) makes a choice to “walk, following the course of this world” (Eph. 2:2). The KJV, ASV, and RSV all, unfortunately interpolate a phrase into verse 1 that does not appear in the text until verse 5! The NIV has a more literal translation here. The beginning emphasis of chapter two is on the divine truth that sinners are DEAD in their “trespasses and sins” period! They are dead because they trespassed (Greek noun, *paraptomasin* from the verb *parapipto*, “stumbled, fell by the wayside, defected, took a false step”). They are dead because they walked around following (Greek verb, aorist plural indicative) the age (Greek noun, *aiona*, “age, a way of behaving, a course”) the world. Did you notice, Paul said the world. The “way of the world” is always, in every generation, wicked and hostile toward God (see Rom. 8:5-8, etc.). Without Christ and his word the worldly-mind-set does not change or evolve or get better or worse! It was as wicked in Paul’s day, in the day of Attila the Hun, in the day of Napoleon, as it is today. Murder is murder, whatever weapons one uses to do it; stealing is stealing; lying is lying; and sexual perversion is perversion regardless of the ways-and-means the worldly-minded invent from century to century to accomplish their vile deeds. Humanity, for the most part, is seduced and “led around” by the devil. Being “led around” by the devil is a choice every one makes, at one time or another. People are not dragged or pushed into sin against their will. Jesus proved, by temptations more severe than any other person’s, that the flesh can be overridden by the Spirit through God’s word (Matt. 4:1-11; 26:36-46; John 12:27; Heb. 5:7-10; 12:1-3). Human believers are promised that there is no temptation they will be unable to bear (1 Cor. 10:6-13). The Greek verb in Eph. 2:3, *anestrophemen*, literally means, “to turn again or turn unto...” and could be translated, “to conduct one’s self, to take a stand of conduct or deportment.” Sinners take up a conduct or manner of deportment that is a declaration of war on God (Rom. 8:7-8)—they are “sons of disobedience.” They “turn to” and indulge what the “flesh” cries for beyond the limits of the flesh God establishes in the Scriptures. It is not the “flesh” that is evil—it is human disobedience with the “flesh” outside the parameters of God’s intentions for the flesh that is “trespassing.” God made the flesh, but he also put a fence around its demands and posted it “no trespassing.” (Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Gal. 5:16-17). Exceeding the limits of God’s intentions for the flesh is not something we do because we can’t help it. The Bible tells us (Rom. 8:1-7; Col. 3:1-4) that we have in us before we sin, the power to set our minds on either the fleshly or the spiritual.

The Greek word translated “nature” in 2:3 is *physei* from which the English prefix, *physio-* and the word *physical*. But Paul does not mean to say here that human beings are prenatally (pre-determined) “natural” sinners. If Paul had intended to tell us that we are children of wrath from the moment we are conceived in our mother’s womb, he would have used a passive verb as the predicate to *physei* but he uses the indicative-imperfect-middle verb *emetha* (“were”). The “middle” voice is unique to the Greek language and represents

the subject as acting with reference to himself. The “imperfect” tense represents an action as going on in past time. Paul says in 2:3 that all of the Ephesians and us were, in our past, doing the wishes of the flesh, and thus were, while we were so doing we were “children of wrath.” But whose wrath were we incurring? ALMIGHTY GOD’S! The same Greek word, *physei*, is used in Romans 2:14 to speak of the Gentiles doing by nature the laws of God when they did not have the written law. Thus, “nature” is the composite of moral choices which forms the character of an individual. Those Gentiles did by choice some of “the laws of God” because their consciences led them to do so—they did not do them because God forced them to do so. “Children of wrath” (Greek for “wrath” is *orge* from which we get the English word, “orgy”) denotes the “inheritance” impenitent sinners who reject the grace of God will receive along with Satan and all the other angels who rebelled against God’s sovereignty. God has built an eternal prison-house where there is an on-going “orgy” of wickedness, punishment, despair, despondency, and separation from all that is good and right and true and holy. Death, in the Bible, is not annihilation—it is separation from God. This is every sinner’s predicament. He is damned forever by divine fiat because of his own wicked choice. The sinner cannot atone for his own sin. Sin against an absolutely perfect and righteous Creator and Savior could only be atoned for when God punished it in a perfect Man (Jesus Christ). Grace is an empty word unless we are convinced we are damned and doomed because of our sin! We can’t build the church without the grace of God—and we will never convince people of the grace of God until we convince them they are sinners, damned to punishment by an Almighty and Wrathful God! This “convincing” of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures and the church (see John 16:7-11; Acts 24:24-25; Eph. 4:11-14). What do you think triggered the growth of the Restoration Movement (ca. 1800-1900)? Things like the “Cane Ridge Camp-meeting” and scripturally-preached revivals under Campbell, Stone, Scott, Smith, and others who brought sinners to “conviction,” “confession” and “immersion for the remission of their sins.”

God is rich (“a plutocrat”) in grace and mercy 2:4. The Greek word *plousios* gives us the English prefix “pluto” which means “rich,” and comes from the mythical Greek god of wealth, Plutus. But how is it possible for God to be both “wrathful” against impenitent sinners, and at the same time extend “mercy” to penitent sinners? God is both just and the justifier (Rom. 3:21-26). God takes out his wrath on Jesus Christ (who did not deserve it) by “making him who knew no sin to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21) and gave us God’s righteousness. All the sin of all humanity (past, present, and future) was punished in Christ on the cross when Christ offered himself willingly to “die” (be separated from God for some length of time and in some way we do not comprehend) for all human sin. However, Christ’s atonement is available only in covenant relationship of faith, love, and obedience on the part of human beings who want it. Actually, the phrase, “you he made alive...” is not in the Greek text of verses 1. The KJV has supplied the words, “hath he quickened” in 2:1 and the RSV supplied the words, he made alive in 2:1. But it is not until we get to 2:5 that the Greek text has the word *sunezoopoiesen* which is translated KJV “quickened” and means, “to endue with life, to make alive.” The middle part of that long Greek word (*zoo*) is the very word from which the English “zoo” and “zoology” originates. Paul teaches here that God accomplished and made available eternal life in Christ for all who will do what his word enjoins them to do

to avail themselves of it. Grace is not something God does to us—it is something he did for us. Paul will tell us in 2:8 how we may avail ourselves of it. Paul says “God raised us up with” Christ when he made us alive “with” Christ. Did you know you have already taken part in a resurrection? (see John 5:24-26; Rom. 6:5-11; Col. 2:12-15; Rev. 20:5-6). When by faith you said, “Yes, I trust Jesus, and accept his death in my place,” then your “old man” was, by divine fiat, “buried with him in baptism (immersion) and resurrected, by divine fiat, to eternal life. You now possess eternal life if you still believe and profess these “facts” in your life. This “first resurrection” in which believers participate is no less a “fact” than the resurrection of Jesus Christ some 2000 years ago. God’s word never “passes away” (Matt. 24:35). God’s word is forever firmly fixed in the heavens (Psa. 119:89). It will stand forever (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:25); it will not return unto him void (Isa. 55:11); none can stay God’s “hand” (word) (Dan. 4:34-35). You, Christian, are a “new creation” in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17).

The moment a believer is “raised up with Jesus” in his first resurrection (i.e., baptism), he is also enthroned with Jesus. God has made believers to “sit” with Jesus in the heavenly places (the church). The Greek verb sunekathisen is aorist, meaning it has already been done. The root of the word, kathemai, gave us the English word “cathedral” because that is where religious “officials” sit! How can Christians now be enthroned with Christ and have such dominion? Christians are: (a) Christ’s ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20); (b) Christ’s stewards (managers) of God’s gospel (1 Cor. 4:1); (c) reborn sinners who now reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4); (d) empowered to conquer the devil and overcome the world (1 John 5:1-5); (e) the only people who know the mind of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit; (f) the only people given access to God; who may ask anything according to his will and know they shall have it; (g) the only people participating in the dominion over creation lost when Adam sinned (Heb. 2:5-15); (h) the only people to have it said of them, “...all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours...” (1 Cor. 3:21). “God is working all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose...” (Rom. 8:28). It may appear to the majority of people in the world that Christians are too meek, or too weak, too humble, or too intolerant of worldliness to “get anywhere in life.” Serprize, serprize, as Gomer used to say! It is Christians who have inherited this earth, as well as the next (new one)! It may not look like it to those who can only “see” the physical, temporary things, but Christians, by faith “see” that which is invisible and eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18) and are aware that God is right now providentially providing to them whatever and whomever of his creation he deems necessary to carry out his redemptive program. Just check out the books of Esther and Daniel for two examples, and then add Isaiah chs. 44-45.

Grace and salvation are the gifts—not faith. Faith is not a gift any more than conscience is a gift. Faith, like conscience, is a human being’s inherent ability (created, of course) to exercise choice. Every human being exercises faith, not only in spiritual matters but in every-day-life matters as well. You “believe” your car will start; you “believe” the grocery store hasn’t moved since you saw it last; you “believe” Timbuktu exists whether you’ve ever been there or not—all on the basis of testimony. “Faith is the reality (Greek,

hupostasis) of things hoped for, the proof (Greek, elegchos) of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). The Greek text forbids interpreting 2:8 to mean faith is the “gift” of God. The Greek noun pisteos (i.e., “faith”) is in the genitive case, while the pronoun touto (i.e., “this”) is in the nominative case. The genitive case defines the limits of the preceding noun. In other words, “faith” (in the gen. case) defines the limitations of the way access is gained into “grace.” The nominative case (“this”) expresses, or denominates, the subject of a finite verb. The verb in this sentence is to be found in this text all the way back in the Greek perfect tense verb sesomenoi “having been saved.” So, the pronoun “this” denominates “salvation” and “grace” as the “gifts” of God—not faith. The Greek word chariti, i.e., “grace,” in v. 8 is in the dative case, and dative case expresses that for which anything is done. “Grace” is that which is done for us—not faith. GOD DOES THE GRACE, HUMANS DO THE FAITH! Even then, there is nothing in human faith that merits God’s grace! When we have done all that is commanded we are still unprofitable servants, for we have done only what was our duty to do (Luke 17:10). Faith doesn’t merit salvation, faith accepts it. When you accept a gift from someone, does your acceptance mean you earned the gift?

If God had not allowed humans to partake of the divine nature (i.e., the Holy Spirit) (2 Pet. 1:3; John 6:35-63), by faith, through his word, they would all be the workmanship of the devil! History documents just how satanic humans can get (Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and millions of the less famous) when they are “worked over by the devil!” We are saved by God’s grace for the purpose of God which is “good works.” We are saved to do good works, but not saved BY them. Christian goodness glorifies God—it doesn’t glorify the Christian (Matt. 5:16). God created humans to do good works for the joy they would get out of doing them! God’s greatest joy is seeing people enjoy themselves because they are doing “good.” It was noted of Jesus that “he went around doing good” (Acts 10:38). No human is, of course, “good” in the ultimate sense. That is why Jesus cautioned the rich young ruler not to use the word “good” indiscriminately. “Good,” meaning “good-character,” should be reserved for God alone! (Luke 18:19). Christians are not “self-good”—they do good. The love of Christ “constrains” Christians to be as much like him as possible, knowing they will fall short.

All human beings alienated themselves from God after the rebellion in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve’s progeny all chose like their “parents” to mistrust God and oppose him. The Greek participle for “having been alienated” is apellotriomenoi, from apo and allotrios or allos and means, literally, “they were made to be other, to belong to another, at sometime in the past and are continuing to do so.” The Greek form of the word (verb, perfect tense, passive voice) translated alienated means that a person has become “other” by the pronouncement of Someone (God) other than himself because the participle is perfect passive indicating the action is being done, not by the subject, but upon the subject. God decreed the Gentiles were “aliens” way back in history, when Abraham’s son by Hagar, Ishmael, was “cast out” and not offered the “covenant promise” given to Isaac. Paul illustrates this momentous event with an allegory in Gal. 4:21-31. Once God chose Abram, because of Abram’s trust in God, he “covenanted” with Abram and his descendants to be the “nation” through whom he would bring the Redeemer into the world. God tested Abram’s trust by ordering him to slay his son of promise, Isaac, as a burnt offering. Abram passed the

test, and God sealed the covenant with the ritual of male circumcision. Before Abram all people on earth, except Noah and his family (Gen. 6:1-8), were so intractably impenitent of their “alienation” toward God, he destroyed all life except that on the “ark.” And even after Noah “jump-started” the human race again, the majority of the human race kept on “alienating” itself from the One True God. But down in Ur of Chaldea, there was a man of God, Abram, through whose “seed” (the Perfect Man, Jesus Christ, see Gal. 3:15-18) it would be possible for God to reconcile (see 2 Cor. 5:18-21) himself with human beings. Jesus “became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Many people, even some Christians, think of redemption’s priority as humanity reconciling itself to God. NOT SO! The necessity in redemption is that God reconciled the world to himself (read it for yourself in 2 Cor. 5:19). The wrath (anger) of an Absolute God has to be appeased with perfect justice in order that perfect mercy may be extended. The way God overcame his alienation of human beings when they sinned is unfathomable, incomprehensible, inexpressible, and even humanly-irrational! Paul says it, “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15). All of God’s actions seem to human beings to be arbitrary and despotic. In fact, they are! “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” (1 Cor. 2:16; see also Rom. 9:1 through 11:36—“how unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!”). In fact, God is called a “despot” by Simeon who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to use the word despota, translated “Lord” (Luke 2:29). A despot is a dictator! If you have trouble with thinking of God as a “dictator” you’d better study your Bible with more intensity! God has never asked anyone to “vote” on his program of redemption—or anything else, for that matter. Angels who disagreed with God’s despotic rule were banished to the realms of darkness (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). God proves that his despotic rule is one of infinite love, blessedness, grace, mercy, kindness, goodness, truth, beauty, and wisdom. And he proved it historically, in the flesh, in time and space, in the Person, Jesus Christ! Now what sane human being would want to rebel against such an infinitely loving despot?

8-9. All rebellious “Gentiles” (and all rebellious “Chosen” Jews) were xenoi, “estranged ones, foreign ones.” God had “disowned” them because of their sin. They were excluded from any covenant relationship with God. Yes, even Jews who reject God’s covenant requirement of faith in Jesus Christ are not members of his covenant according to the NT, and, never were, even in the OT (see Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-13, etc.). Unredeemed (all of them) are “without God and without hope in the world.” A Godless person is a hopeless person. Any initiative to find truth, or ambition to learn righteousness, or striving for self-control, desire for justice, concern about compassion, and respect for goodness dies without hope! The wall of hostility (Greek, echthran, “hatred, enmity, at-war-with”) was the hatred of human beings toward God evoked by the devil’s lies about him. All humans actually declare war on God (Rom. 8:5-8; James 4:8) when they refuse to keep his commandments! When that happens, God declares war on human beings unless they accept the “peace terms” he offers by the grace of Jesus Christ! Hostility, war, hatred is dealt with in Christ. God’s grace (atonement by the work of Christ) provides a “peace treaty” for God’s hostility toward men. Christ’s death appeases the wrath of God upon sin (Rom. 5:10). At the same time, God’s grace offers mankind the opportunity to abolish its hostility toward God by trusting in the promises of Christ. When man’s hostility toward God is reconciled, then man’s hostility toward his fellow man is abolished, for he “sees” God and interprets all God’s creatures

through the perspective of divine love (2 Cor. 5:14-16). This divine treaty of peace has an expiration date for its availability. Some day, no one knows when (it could be Today), Jesus will appear with his angels in flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:8-9) and instantaneous victory will be his. Rebellious people from all generations will be cast into the lake of fire to live with the devil and rebellious angels forever. Reconciled human beings, divine-peace-treaty signers—by belief, repentance and baptism into Christ—will be “caught up to be with the Lord forever, and with others who are with him now. Those who accept God’s “peace-treaty” do not have to fight their way into Christ by defeating God. They do not have to devise a way to sneak in, or come up with trillions of dollars and buy their way. Enemies of God are INVITED, WELCOMED, SOUGHT OUT, AND CONSTRAINED TO COME IN—GOD BEGS HIS ENEMIES TO COME BACK TO HIM IN PEACE THROUGH WHAT CHRIST DID BY DEFEATING SIN IN THE FLESH (Rom. 8:1-4), AND PAYING THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION (1 Cor. 6:9-20; Heb. 9:12; 10:1-14; 1 Pet. 1:18-25).

The Greek word *apokatallaxe*, translated “reconcile” is a word from the Greek market-place meaning “to change, or to exchange.” Thus, “reconciliation” is the result of a “change” in attitude, and/or action. Do not ever let anyone tell you that there was no reconciliation of God toward man. The word “propitiation” in the Greek text is *hilasterion*, and means “to avert wrath.” The Bible describes the death of Christ as a propitiation, “an appeasement of the wrath of God” (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). In his death, Jesus Christ satisfied the wrath of God. God acted to appease his own wrath (Eph. 2:16) in an event on the basis-of-which he can actually and objectively disregard man’s sin. Jesus reconciled both Jew and Gentile and God to one another by slaying (Greek, *apokteinas*, “killing”) the hostility on the cross. Jesus did not merely defeat sin, he killed it on the cross FOR ALL WHO WANT IT KILLED IN THEIR LIVES! The Greek phrase, *ton nomon ton entolon en dogmasin*, “the law and the commandments are in dogmatics.” Biblical “dogmatics” denominate what Jesus “killed” on the cross. “Dogmatic” means the “law of commandments” (the law of Moses) was “exacting and unsparing.” Jesus did not destroy the law (Matt. 5:17-18) but he fulfilled it by “killing” its scrupulous and un-exonerating demands for perfect payment for sin. By so doing, when any person accepts by faith and obedience what Christ accomplished, Christ takes them into the presence of Almighty God, our Father and Friend. The Greek word *prosagogen*, means, literally, “a leading or bringing into the presence of...” It is the same word as the one in Romans 5:2 and Ephesians 3:12, and is translated “access.” Paul describes our “access” to God (without using the word *prosagogen*) through the flesh and blood atonement of Christ in Hebrews 10:19-25. Of course, God’s presence is everywhere. He is omnipresent! Unbelieving sinners commit their sins in his very presence whether they think so or not! His eye never sleeps, his arm never rests. The access or presence granted the Christian by grace, is the presence of reconciled prodigal “sons” (Luke 15:7-24). It is the loving welcome of the Father who bestows all his bountiful gifts upon the penitent, returning child. All the hostility between Father and child is wiped out in Christ. The absolute openness and freedom of grace comes from the “Father” and the prodigal is restored, not to servant-hood, but to SONSHIP! That grand reunion does not have to wait for heaven—it can begin here and now, with any person willing to repent and turn back toward “home.” Sidney Cave, English, Christian philosopher, wrote, “The plight of sinners in the modern world is they have lost their heavenly Father and feel not liberated but merely

insecure. Many have lost the sense of a father's care but not their sense of need." That's the story of the rebellious prodigal child, but by the grace of God, the story doesn't have to end in the "far country," and the "hog-pen."

Jesus has restored heavenly family status to all who want it on his terms. Those who take up their cross (die to self) and follow him are no longer sojourners and non-residents. Believers have a permanent home—in fact, their home is eternal! It will never deteriorate, be destroyed, unoccupied or broken into! The Prodigal Son (all of us) became derelict (today we call them "homeless") having no family status with his father by his own choice—then he was unwanted by the citizens of the "far country," except as they could exploit him. How true that is of the rebellious and impenitent sinner against God. He is a "homeless" wanderer, and all the other "homeless" sinners want with him is to exploit him! When the irresponsible prodigal wants to be back home with the father enough "to come to himself" (i.e., "get some sense into his head"), he will find the Father waiting with "grace that is greater than all his sin!" The Father will give him the best of everything in the Father's house! CAN YOU "DIG IT?" GOD, THE MAGNANIMOUS FATHER IS BEGINNING ON EARTH, RIGHT NOW, TO GIVE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST THEIR "SONSHIP." AND HE WILL GIVE TO THEM COMPLETELY WHEN THEY ARRIVE "HOME," THE BEST OF HEAVEN'S TREASURES! As C. S. Lewis wrote in his book, *The Weight of Glory*, an exposition of 2 Cor. 4:16-18, "The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination (God's judgment), shall find approval, shall please God. To please God...to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness...to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is." Paul now changes metaphors. He informs his readers in 2:20-22 that believers, by the grace of God, are "being built," and "are growing" (Greek, *auxei*, "increasing, getting larger, becoming more significant") into "a dwelling place of God in the Spirit"—a holy temple, no less! Paul is emphatic that Christians DO "fit into" the structure already begun with the foundation of apostles and prophets, and Christ the "head of the corner" so Christians "may be joined together" as tightly and perfectly as "specially chosen" bricks or stones would do in a perfect temple which will be the place where God lives permanently, forever and ever.

So, the grace of God embraces the loner, the derelict, the homeless, the prodigal and makes him an integral part of the household, yea, even a part of the temple "building" where God's presence dwells. No more loneliness in God's grace. No! There is real, eternal togetherness! That is the CHURCH! Isn't that what the sinner needs—or what? Then, by the grace of God, let's build the church with sinners brought "home." The church, saved by grace, is where God's immediate presence is dwelling—invisibly, yes, but there just as surely as you are, even when you are gone from our Park Plaza church building! The church is where God lives, all the time, every day, and forever. He doesn't go somewhere else when services are over. When we look at the church, on earth, in its journey through this vale of tears, we readily acknowledge that it is only by his grace that he chooses to live in it! Let us never deceive ourselves that we are doing God a favor by letting him dwell in the

church—IT IS HIS BY GRACE TOWARD US—HE PURCHASED IT WITH THE BLOOD OF HIS “ONLY-UNIQUELY” PRECIOUS SON, JESUS! God dwells in the church in his Spirit. His Spirit is the real and eternal Him! There is nothing about him that could be more Him, or more real, than His Spirit! No one can make an image of Him that would be more real. Even if he were here in the flesh he would not be more real—and he was here, in the flesh,, 2000 years ago, and very few people would admit it was really Him! The Spirit is what is real! God proved that to us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So you see, the reality of the Spirit is by the grace of God, too! You and I just cannot escape from the necessity of the grace of God. Like John Newton wrote, “‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved....” Isn’t that interesting! “Grace taught my heart to fear...” in order that I might find “grace to relieve my fears!” GOD’S GRACE LOVES, BUT IT DOES NOT INDULGE!

My Grace is Sufficient for You

My way seemed so long and so dreary,
 My burdens were so hard to bear;
 I said: “Dear Lord, please have mercy:”
 But no answer came to my prayer.
 I bowed my head in self-pity
 Crying, “Lord, don’t you care about me?”
 Then did I hear Him answer:
 “My grace is sufficient for thee!”

O God, forgive my murmuring:
 I lost sight of your cruel cross.
 My eyes were blind to your suffering,
 Your stripes, humiliation and loss.
 Now that my eyes have been opened,
 Give me courage instead of release;
 Let me hear again your whisper:
 “My grace is sufficient for thee!”

And when I come to cross Jordan,
 I know you’ll be there with a smile;
 My hand You’ll hold in our pierced one,
 Traveling the last weary mile.

We’ll go through the gates of Splendor,
 My great God I at last shall see;
 He will say, “My child, I told you,
 My grace is sufficient for thee!”

by, Verna Lois Butler (Paul T. Butler’s late beloved “Mom” who heard Him say, on March 23, 1984, “My grace is sufficient for thee—isn’t it?!”)

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler

EPHESIANS 3:1-21

The Holy Spirit makes his dwelling in the church, i.e., human beings, only through the agency of REVELATION. He is not subject to the whims and fancies of human dictates. He does not “indwell” on the basis of human coercion at all, but on the basis of human surrender to the revelation of God. God has placed limits upon the sphere in which he will give grace. That sounds paradoxical (limits to grace), but so it is! There are many paradoxes in the revelation of God (in both OT and NT). God’s grace is available only in Christ, by faith, through revelation. Man has no rights or prerogatives in the matter. Man cannot tell God how the Divine Person will dwell in the church! God tells man how it shall be! This revelation (as Paul speaks of it in Ephesians 3:3) is the Gospel. It was entrusted exclusively to the apostles. Anyone else claiming to have a revelation from God is accursed (Gal. 1:8-9) and is anti-Christ (1 John 4:1-6). The revelation of the Divine Person, the Holy Spirit, and God’s plan of salvation by grace is not a continuing revelation. It has been “once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) IN THE COMPLETED BIBLE AS WE HAVE IT!

The Greek word is *mysterion*. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, defines *mysterion* as, “...primarily that which is known to the initiated, from *mueo*—to initiate into the mysteries.” *Mysterion* was a special word in the vocabulary of the mystery religions of ancient Greece.” In the mystery religions there was “secret” information known only to the practitioners of the religion. No one could find out that information without becoming a “member” of the cult (much like many “lodges” in today’s world). In the NT it denotes, not that which is unknowable, as we think of the word in the English language today, but that which is outside the range of unassisted human knowledge and is able to be known only by divine revelation. God knew this “mystery” all along, and revealed it partially and gradually in the OT (see Heb. 1:1). God’s mystery to the world was: (1) that God’s “Messiah” would come into the world in a human body (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-16; 52—53:12; 1 Tim. 3:16); (2) that in the Messiah (i.e., Christ), the Gentiles were to be fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the messianic promises! NOW THAT WOULD BE SOME “MYSTERY” TO MOST OF THE JEWS WHO DID NOT THINK THIS WOULD EVER BE POSSIBLE! This mystery was not made known to other generations of the sons of men (Gentiles) AS it was revealed to the prophets and apostles. It was made known to the OT prophets, especially Isaiah, Daniel, & Micah but not clearly, completely, and with the finality by which it was made known in the apostolic revelation. And, most of the people to whom the OT prophets spoke refused to believe what they heard about God blessing the Gentiles in the future (Isa. 19:16-25; 55:1—56:8). That God’s Messianic blessings of redemption and salvation were for the Gentiles, too, became clear as the apostles began to preach and work miracles among Gentile people substantiating the fact that God’s “mystery” was for them also. IN THE FIRST CENTURY THAT WAS THE ONLY PURPOSE FOR MIRACLES—TO SUBSTANTIATE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE! God’s mystery is not mysterious now! There is undeniable historical evidence that Jesus is God’s Messiah and God intends the Gentiles to

have the Messianic hope in Christ. That is the mystery of the Holy Spirit also! There is really nothing “mysterious” NOW about the work of the Holy Spirit—His work is to convict the world of this very thing (Jn. 16:1-15). His work is recorded in a Bible that has been translated into hundreds of languages. Most men can read God’s “mystery” and know it today! God’s “mystery” can be preached and taught, and must be if the church is to be built!

The Greek word *apokalypsin*, means “to uncover, to disclose, divulge, make public, unveil.” In the Biblical sense of “revelation” it is God uncovering, or disclosing his will for mankind. The mind of God, his purposes, his will, his feelings, his intentions, even his nature or character cannot be known unless he wishes to be known (1 Cor. 2:1-16). Therefore, whatever is known about God has to be revealed by him. He chooses to do that “revealing” however, whenever, and by whomever he wishes (John 14-15-16; Heb. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12; Gal. 1:11-17, etc.). God has “revealed” himself (in a limited way) in his creation (Rom. 1:18-23). He has revealed himself in the OT “prophets”—Heb. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:10-12) (which includes Moses, David, Joshua, Ezra, Nehemiah, etc. as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etal.). Some of the things about which the apostles (and Luke) wrote, they saw (or others saw) with their own eyes. Their accounts of Jesus’ miracles and teachings are eyewitness accounts. Some of what the OT prophets wrote, they saw or learned from other eyewitnesses. But God “revealed” a great deal of what both “prophets and apostles” wrote by what we call “inspiration” but the Bible actually calls it God-breathed or God-spirited. The Greek word in 2 Tim. 3:16 translated “inspiration” is *theopneustos*, a compound word of *Theos* or “God” and *pneustos* or “breathed, spirited.” A more literal interpretation would be “out-spired.” God “breathed-out” from himself and “into” the prophets and apostles through his Holy Spirit, in some manner or other. We are not told in precise terms just how God did his revealing through the Spirit. In OT times, to the prophets, he spoke audibly, gave dreams and visions, spoke through animals, wrote in stone and on walls, etc. On one occasion in the NT, Christ spoke audibly with Paul (on the road to Damascus); Stephen saw a vision; John saw “visions” (Revelation); Paul was caught up into the “third heaven” and heard things that couldn’t be told because either he was forbidden to tell or there are no words in human language by which he could describe them (I think probably the latter). Paul says simply that he was given his message by “revelation” (Ga. 1:16; 2:2). Perhaps the best explanation the Bible gives of “revelation” or “inspiration” is by Peter when he wrote, “...no prophecy (in this context Peter uses the Greek word *prophetia* to mean “utterance” not necessarily a prediction) of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation (not a good translation of the Greek word *epiluseos*, “to loose, to solve, to explain, to release”), because no prophecy (utterance) ever came by the impulse (or “will”) of man, but men moved (Greek word is *pheromenoi*, “borne along, carried”) by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). W. E. Vine says, “PHERO...to bear, to carry, is rendered ‘being moved’ in 2 Pet. 1:21, signifying that they were borne along, or impelled, by the Holy Spirit’s power, not acting according to their own wills, or simply expressing their own thoughts, but expressing the mind of God in words provided and ministered by Him.” In other words, Peter wrote, “...no utterance of scripture is a matter of one’s own releasing of it, because no utterance of scripture ever came by the will or choice of man, but men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Paul wrote, “...no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God...Now we (apostles, not all Christians) have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is

from God, that we (apostles) might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we (apostles) declare this in words..." (1 Cor. 2:11-13a). The important phrase for human beings is—"And we declare this in WORDS..." What God breathed-out and into the apostles, they declared in words (i.e., in human languages, see Acts 2:7-12; 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:1-5) to all the world. WE HAVE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE (EXTANT MANUSCRIPTS, ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFIRMATIONS, SECULAR HISTORICAL CONFIRMATIONS, ETC.) TO ESTABLISH THE CLAIMS FOR THE "REVELATION" AND "INSPIRATION" OF THE BIBLE! If there is any salvation for human beings beyond this life—the knowledge of it and the verification of it would have to come by "revelation" since in the whole of history man he has not "found out" a "salvation" on his own! LIVING HUMAN BEINGS WILL DIE JUST AS SURELY AS ALL HUMAN BEINGS BEFORE THEM HAVE DIED. NONE OF THEM HAVE SURVIVED! THE BIBLE RECORD SAYS THAT ONE PERSON IN A BODY OF FLESH DID SURVIVE DEATH. HE CLAIMED TO BE THE SON OF GOD AND CLAIMED THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE "SALVATION" TO ALL WHO TRUST HIM!

Walter Scott, was originator of the phrase, "The Golden Oracle," great evangelist of the Restoration Movement, baptized over 30,000 believers into Christ was a contemporary of Alexander Campbell, "Raccoon" John Smith, Barton W. Stone, etal. Scott wrote in his book, The Messiahship, or Great Demonstration, ppg. 13-14: "In Christianity, the two great generalizations are Christ and His religion. His Messiahship rests on power, and His religion on authority. The former is, of course, the problem; the latter the dogma. In the Scriptures, the Messiahship is never placed on authority, but on proof; and the doctrine, on the contrary, is never placed on proof, but on authority; the reason for which is this: it being there proved that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, it is consequently assumed that nothing He teaches can possibly be false. The strongest argument which can possibly be offered for the truth of His doctrine is, therefore, this: Magister dixit—The Master has said it!" If you have never read, Walter Scott, American Frontier Evangelist, by William A. Gerrard III, 1992, pub. College Press, YOU HAVE MISSED MORE THAN HALF YOUR EDUCATION ABOUT THE 19TH CENTURY MOVEMENT TO RESTORE THE "ANCIENT ORDER" OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH (CHRISTIAN CHURCH)! For your sake, for your children's sake, for the sake of Christ's Church—READ IT! Alexander Campbell had one theme which, it is said, continually consumed his thinking processes: "Christianity—its foundation is facts, not theory; its design, the conversion of the world; and its great moving principles, faith and love."

Paul told the Ephesians that when they read his epistle they would perceive his insight into the mystery of Christ. In this letter to the Ephesian Christians Paul has already reminded them in chapters 1 and 2 of many things he had preached to them. And in the following chapters (3,4,5,6) he will remind them of more of his doctrine as he preached it to them for 3 years! So there was no hocus-pocus, "inner," subjective guessing on the part of the Christians at Ephesus about Paul's "insight" (the Greek word is sunesin, from suniemi, meaning "to understand, to comprehend thoroughly"). Paul "comprehended thoroughly" the "mystery" of God's incarnation in Jesus (Col. 1:19; 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:14-21, etc., etc.) and God's inclusion of the Gentiles in his covenant of redemption and salvation. The Ephesians would be able to realize Paul's complete understanding of God's revelation of

redemption by reading his epistle which contained a summarization of what he had preached to them! It is a great tragedy that in about 35 years (when John wrote Revelation ca. A.D. 98) the church at Ephesus had “abandoned its first love” (Rev. 2:4). Perhaps they did not read Paul’s epistle as often as they should! We should learn from this tragedy of church history that it is possible for a congregation to neglect the apostolic teachings and “abandon their first love.”

John Oxenham’s Bees in Amber—

Not what, but WHOM, I do believe,

That in my darkest hour of need,

Hath comfort that no mortal creed to mortal man may give—

Not what, but WHOM!

For Christ is more than all the creeds

And His full life of gentle deeds

Shall all the creeds outlive.

Not what I do believe, but WHOM!

Notice—Paul did not say the promise that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs of the Messiah was totally hidden from other generations of men. He said, in effect, “....in other generations of mankind this mystery had not been made known AS IT WAS NOW REVEALED to Christ’s holy apostles and prophets.” The OT prophets “made it known” that the Gentiles would have some kind of relationship to the God of the Jews. I taught the OT Prophets at Ozark Christian College for 35 years and never ceased to be amazed how much the OT prophets include the Gentiles, or “nations” (Heb. goim) in the future blessings of God through his “Anointed” (Messiah). Just a few citations for example: Isa. 11:1-10 is messianic and includes the “nations.” Isa. 19:20-25 is messianic and includes Gentiles. Isa. 25:6-12 is messianic and includes “all peoples and nations.” Isa. 49:1-7 is messianic and includes “nations.” Isa. 52:7-15 is a lead in to the most messianic passage of the OT, Isa. Ch. 53—the Suffering Servant of God! Isa. 55:3 is quoted in Acts 13 by Paul as being messianic so read the passage from Isa. 55:1-5! Isaiah 60:1-18 is a promise that the “nations” will serve the Lord of the Israelites some day. Isaiah 56:1-12 is messianic and includes “foreigners.” Isaiah 61:1-2 is quoted by Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk. 4:1ff) as a messianic prophecy so read on through Isa. 61:3-11. The Great Temple of Ezekiel chapters 40-48 is one and the same “temple” (the church) of Eph. 2:11-22. Ezekiel’s “temple” is a great symbol or type which must include all “aliens” among God’s future people who “shall be to Israel as native born sons” (Ezek. 47:21-23). No Jew, neither Solomon, Nehemiah (with Ezra, Zerubbabel, Haggai), nor Herod ever built a literal temple like Ezekiel’s! In fact no one ever shall—it would be a geographical and physical impossibility. It has to be symbolic of the “dwelling place of God in the Spirit,” the church of Eph. 2:22 (see Ezek. 48:35). Zechariah chapters 9-14 are all essentially Messianic. Zech. 9:9 is quoted in the Gospels as fulfilled at the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem on “Palm Sunday.” Please read Zech. 9:10 and see that it applies to the “nations” (Heb. goim). See Zech. 12:10—13:9 and John 19:37. See

Zech. 14:1-21 how often “all the families of the earth” and “nations” are mentioned. The NEW covenant of God’s grace predicted by Jeremiah 31:31-34 was intended for Christians (see Heb. 8:8-12). However, as Peter agreed with Paul, the “mystery” of God’s redemptive program was not revealed to the prophets AS it was to THE APOSTLES (see 1 Pet. 1:10-12). Can you imagine how amazed Moses, David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all those other OT saints must be as they gather around the throne with all the apostles now! Yes, you may imagine it—just read Revelation chapters 4 & 5! As to WHY the “mystery” was hidden from the “other generations” it is clear from the NT that they were not even close to being spiritually prepared to comprehend humanity’s need for a vicarious atonement through a PERFECT HUMAN BEING LIKE JESUS CHRIST (see Gal. 3:23-29; 2 Cor. 3:7-18—and the whole book of Hebrews). Not even Jesus’ little band of 12 apostles comprehended what Jesus was trying to teach them. The heathen were sacrificing to dumb idols; the Jews were making animal sacrifices and “paying” for their atonement through offerings. This was all a “school” for humanity, to lead it to “higher education” in the redemptive work of the grace of God through a “Suffering-Servant-kind-of-a-Messiah, born of a virgin, a worker of miracles, a master teacher of God’s will, perfectly sinless, perfectly holy, and finally crucified by sinners, but raised from the dead by Almighty God with astounding wonders and signs and miracles. “...when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son...” Gal. 4:4. THE MYSTERY WAS DIVULGED AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD!

The Bible does not use the word “all” flippantly or capriciously. When it says “all” it means “ALL.” It doesn’t mean some, several, many, or most—it means ALL, every single one. So Paul writes that he was made a minister (servant) of the Gospel of Christ...to preach (Greek, euaggelisasthai, “evangelize”) to the Gentiles (and on every occasion he could, to Jews—see Acts) the unsearchable riches of Christ and to bring to light (Greek, photisai, the word from which we get English “photosynthesis,” etc.) what his stewardship (Greek, oikonomia, “manager, trusteeship, mentor”) of the great, heretofore, hidden “mystery” of God was all about. One of the great passages from the pen of the apostle Paul that parallels this is Colossians 1:24-29. Paul was EMPHATIC that it was through apostolic PREACHING (or “evangelizing”) which became the New Testament scriptures, that the whole (“ALL”) world should come to know the “mystery” of God’s formerly “hidden” plan of redemption in Christ!! Now that the apostles have been ushered into the glorious presence of Christ in heaven, the Bible, with emphasis on the New Testament scriptures, is to be PREACHED & TAUGHT by “faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:1-7). In other words, the world cannot ever know God’s formerly “mysterious” plan of redemption (now revealed in the NT scriptures) unless there are FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS in every generation who will preach it and teach it to others also!! It is preaching, teaching, evangelizing that is the TASK OF THE CHURCH—not entertaining, not feeding, not democratizing, not philosophizing, not psychologizing, not even educating (secularly).

The need for preachers, missionaries, Bible teachers, will never cease—it will only become more urgent and demand more numbers of evangelists as the world’s population increases! FROM WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE FAITHFUL EVANGELISTS COME?---THE CHURCH, OF COURSE! Certainly not from secular institutions or resources! It is the

church's destiny, obligation, privilege, and honor to supply the world with evangelists. Through the church the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known to all humanity, even to the authorities appointed by heaven to rule over the world (Eph. 3:10). Paul wrote to Timothy that the church is the pillar (Greek *stulos*, "a supporting column") and buttress (Greek, *edraion*, "seat, base, mainstay, backbone") of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). If a local congregation does not train evangelists itself, it must cooperate with other congregations to found, fund, and oversee a para-church institution to do the job, i.e., Bible colleges. How is Christ's church doing in this matter these days? I mean, in light of the world's need, is the church focusing enough of its resources (students, money, other support) on this matter? Once faithful evangelists are trained, is the church doing all it is able to send, pray for, write to, support financially, and supervise them? Remember, the backbone, the mainstay, the pillar of THE TRUTH OF GOD IS THE CHURCH! The redemptive truth of Almighty God, and his Son Jesus Christ is DEPOSITED WITH (NOT "IN"), ENTRUSTED TO, AND SPREAD ALL OVER THE WORLD BY YOU—YOU---AND YOU— BECAUSE THE CHURCH IS NOT AN "INSTITUTION"—IT IS INDIVIDUALS! What an honor! What a privilege! What an assignment! It has become starkly and startlingly obvious to me now that I'm an octogenarian (you can look it up—it means "over 80 years of age") that generations of evangelists, preachers, missionaries, and Bible teachers COME AND GO WITH PENSIVE AND ALARMING RAPIDITY! If the church lets down, if she becomes complacent, about training FAITHFUL evangelists for just one generation, she will find herself in the company of the 7 churches of Asia Minor (Rev. chapters 2 & 3), just like the church at Ephesus did!!!

The church is not to fret about or feel responsible for producing growth. It is God's word that produces growth! When the "seed" (the word of God) is planted it produces, according to Mark 4:21-24 (Greek *automate*, or "automatically") "of itself." The church is not to measure itself by human organizations lest it adopt human methods. The members of Christ's church are planters and waterers (God gives the increase—1 Cor. 3:1-9). God has not endowed the church today with great miracles or expertise in methods—he has given the church grace and a message, that's all she needs. A divine motive—grace. A divine message—the gospel of grace. If our reason for not making all men see what is the plan of God is lack of money or tools or programs and plans, why is it that the first century church was able to saturate the Roman Empire with the plan of God? Were they richer than we? Better equipped than we? Christians (the church) have been strengthened in the "inner man." THAT'S ONE PART OF THE CHURCH'S POWER! The human flesh (the "outer" person) is simply a veil obscuring the real person which is "within the veil." Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Though our outer man is wasting away, our inner man is being renewed every day (2 Cor. 4:16). He wrote to the Thessalonians about "being sanctified wholly; in spirit, soul, and body" (1 Thess. 5:23) (see also Job 32:8; Prov. 20:27; Eccl. 12:7; Acts 7:59; James 2:26; Matt. 20:28; Rev. 6:9). The inner man is strengthened by the Divine Person, the Holy Spirit of God. INNER STRENGTH IS ALL THAT WILL SURVIVE HUMAN MORTALITY! There is really no promise of constant, eternal strengthening of the "outer" physical person. It is "wasting away, being disabled, decaying." (See also Rom. 8:20-21). We may have this force, this power, by daily partaking of the Bread of Life. If we do not, we have no life in us! (John 6:35-63). JESUS SAID HIS WORD WAS SPIRIT AND LIFE. This "inner person" is not strengthened or renewed by transcendental meditation, by prayer, by music, art, philosophy,

psychology, or positive thinking—BUT BY FEEDING ON THE SPIRIT THROUGH HIS WORD! Read it for yourself in John 6:35-63!

Z. T. Sweeney, great Christian Church (Restoration Movement) preacher, in *THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD*, reprint by Gospel Advocate, no date, ppg. 118-121 wrote this: “How does Christ dwell in us? The passage above quoted (Eph. 3:17) says, ‘Christ shall dwell in your hearts by faith;’ more correctly rendered, ‘the faith’ (Gr. tes pisteos), or the gospel. How does the Spirit dwell in us? In Gal. 3:2, Paul asks the Galatians: ‘Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of the faith?’—or the gospel. The above Scriptures clearly teach that when the words, thoughts and Spirit of God are controlling in our lives, God dwells in us; that when the gospel controls us, Christ dwells in us; that when we receive the gospel by the hearing of faith, the Spirit dwells in us. But says one, I do not have to depend upon the Word. I know it by my own consciousness (feeling). It is a principle as old as metaphysics (philosophy—logic) that consciousness does not take cognizance of causes, but of effects. You may be conscious of an effect within you, but you can not be conscious of the cause that produced the effect. Suppose you are lying asleep on the ground; you are suddenly awakened by a severe pain in your lower limb; consciousness (feeling) tells you that you are suffering pain, but it does not tell you what produced that pain. This must be decided by reason or faith. If you find a thorn in the grass where your limb was resting, reason says the thorn stuck you; if you find a bumblebee mashed in the grass, reason will say the insect stung you; or, if someone near you says a boy with a pin in his hand ran away from you, faith will say the boy stuck you. But in either case it was reason or faith that decided the cause of your pain. Now, when a man says, I am conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit within me, he simply means, I am conscious of a feeling within me which I have been taught was caused by the Holy Spirit. If a man has been taught wrong, he assigns a wrong cause for the feeling. I assert it to be a fact that everything that is claimed to be effected by a personal indwelling of the Spirit is clearly accomplished by the Spirit acting through the word of God. It is the testimony of metaphysicians, from Sir William Hamilton down to the writer, that consciousness (feeling) does not take cognizance of causes, but effects. Feelings are effects and not causes. Consciousness tells us when we feel good or bad, but it does not tell us what makes us feel good or bad. When a man has been taught that a certain feeling in his heart is produced by a certain agency, his faith and reason may decide that agency produced the feeling, but consciousness has nothing whatever to do with the cause of the feeling. Likewise, a certain feeling in the heart may be attributed to the Spirit because one has been taught that the Spirit will produce such a feeling, but consciousness can not trace that feeling to the Spirit himself. A man should feel right because he knows he is right, and not know he is right because he feels right.” (PTB’s note: “For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all...” 2 Cor. 5:14. **THE LOVE OF CHRIST DOES NOT COME TO US SUBJECTIVELY, BUT OBJECTIVELY—HISTORICALLY, AS WE ARE CONVINCED OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS AND THE REST OF THE N.T.**)

The instrumentality by which Christ dwells in the heart of a person, is, as we emphasized in #7 above, HIS WORD. But God can only use his “instrument” (His Holy Spirit

in His Word) to allow Christ “to dwell in us” IF WE HAVE THE FAITH (Greek, *dia tes pisteos*, literally, “through the faith,” Eph. 3:17) WHICH IS THE SECOND PART OF THE CHURCH’S POWER----“THE FAITH.” “The faith” is a composite of the facts and doctrines of the New Testament. Jude wrote, (Jude v. 3), in Greek, *parakalon epagonizesthai te hapax paradotheise tois hagiois pistei*, literally translated, “exhorting (you) to contend earnestly (agonize, wrestle, struggle) for the faith once-for-all-delivered to the saints,” “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.” (Rom. 10:17). Read it for yourself! The faith doesn’t come by prayer, by “an experience,” by feeling, by miracle, or by wishing it to be so. THE FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF CHRIST. If the church is to be strengthened with God’s POWER, IT MUST HEAR THE WORD OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE TAUGHT AND PREACHED! It is not necessarily human “faith” that makes it possible for Christ to dwell in human hearts. Lots of people have some kind of faith or other! Muslims have faith in Allah and his prophet Mohammed; many Asians have faith in the teachings of Buddha; lots of Americans have faith in evolutionary science; some even have faith in faith! The faith, is what roots and grounds us in love (Greek *errizomenoi kai tethemeliomenoi*, “rooted and grounded” are perfect tense participles meaning, “having been rooted and grounded...you continue to be so only in love.”) by which Christ dwells in our hearts. In other words, LOVE (see 1 Cor. 13), is the root and ground of our inner person in Christ. The faith makes possible the indwelling of Christ, but the purpose of it all is rooting and grounding the inner person in love. Make love your aim!

God’s “root and ground” for the inner person is in deeds of love. But remember, it was God’s love for us FIRST that motivates us to love him and in return and have the faith in us. Many people are rootless, groundless, dissatisfied, despondent, disappointed, drifting BECAUSE THEY ARE SELF-CENTERED. They’ve never loved anybody but themselves all their lives! Loving God because of Christ, and living it out in doing for others, brings satisfaction, fulfillment, purpose, rooting and grounding for life. At the end of life, self-centeredness only brings despair and disgust, not only from others, but from oneself! And hell will be an eternity for self-centered people to be alone with themselves! True love can only come when Christ abides in our hearts, and that comes when we have him in our hearts through THE FAITH, and obey him. Christ dwells in us through the faith to ground us in love, to strengthen us in order that we may comprehend him and his will for us. What does he want us to comprehend. We already know what he wants us to comprehend. He wants us to comprehend the scriptures in order that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. IT IS A CLEAR AND VERY OFTEN REPEATED TEACHING OF THE BIBLE THAT GOD’S SPIRIT FILLS US IN PROPORTION TO OUR COMPREHENDING HIM IN HIS WORD! And God wants us to comprehend him so that he can work in us with power to do far more abundantly than ALL we ask or think! There’s that word ALL again! There is NOTHING in the experience of humanity by which people may COMPARE what GOD is able to DO within them or for them (read 2 Cor. 4:16-18). God is able to do far MORE than we can IMAGINE, OR DREAM, OR ASK, OR THINK, OR FEEL. Does that “floor” you? Have you, with me, wondered why God’s power hasn’t worked more powerfully in us? What limits his power? OUR LACK OF THE FAITH IN US! Remember, he dwells in us through The faith; in order that we may comprehend; so that he can work in us with unimaginable power! The more completely we are rooted and grounded to Jesus in love, the more we will comprehend and

be filled with his fulness, and as a result, he will do things in us which will flow out of us that we cannot even imagine could be done! But this “rooting and grounding” may lead us into NARROW AND DIFFICULT PATHS—INTO PRESSURIZED, DISCIPLINED, SACRIFICING WAYS! We are amazed that God could do so much with the Roman Empire by the little Jewish, ex-rabbi, Saul of Tarsus...but look at the thorny ways he had to walk (2 Cor. 12:7-10), to be hungry and full, abased and abounding (Phil. 4:10-13)—so he could learn to be “rooted and grounded in love.”

NOW, AFTER ALL OF THIS, DO WE HAVE TO WONDER? IS THE CHURCH BUILT BY THE INDWELLING PRESENCE OF GOD’S SPIRIT IN EACH OF ITS MEMBERS? NOW, AFTER ALL OF THIS, DO WE HAVE TO WONDER? GOD’S SPIRIT DWELLS IN EACH OF THE CHURCH’S MEMBERS THROUGH THE AGENCY OF HIS WORD (JN. 6:35-63), WHEN EACH MEMBER HAS THE FAITH IN HIM. NOW, AFTER ALL OF THIS, DO WE HAVE TO WONDER? BEING ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF CHRIST! SO THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IS TO PROCLAIM THE WORD OF CHRIST SO THAT PEOPLE MAY BELIEVE, HAVE CHRIST “IN” THEM, AND “PLUG INTO” THE UNIMAGINABLE POWER OF ALMIGHTY GOD!

“In our religion (Christianity) there are many mysteries, or opened secrets—many things, which, till revealed in Christianity, were unknown to the world. But though these are numerous, only one of them is marked out definitely as ‘the mystery’—only one of them is styled, by way of eminence, ‘to mysterion’ the mystery...And it is thus named because before the era of Christ it was unknown both to Jews and Gentiles....Our reconciliation to God and to one another by the blood of Christ, our sanctification by the Spirit, our organization under Christ, our resurrection, the last judgment, the burning of the world, and eternal life are all mysteries, but none of them is styled the great mystery....there is a secret which from the foundation of the world was hid in God, dropped into prophecy, afterward made good in history, and finally offered for faith to all nations, which in sublimity and glory excels all these as far as the splendors of the meridian sun excel the twinklings of the most distant of the fixed stars. Paul styles it not only the great but the ‘incontro-vertibly great’ mystery or revelation. Is it asked then what this is? ‘God was manifest in the flesh!’

—Walter Scott (born, 10-31-1796, County Dumfriesshire, Scotland; died, 4-23-1861, May’s Lick, Kentucky, 64 ½ yrs. of age), in his book, *The Messiahship, or Great Demonstration*, 1859, pp. 220.

....It was necessary, therefore, before man could re-ascend, that the Creator should provide a redeemer, who should be not only Adam’s antithesis but his own also—himself and another at the same time! This he did in his own Son; who to meet our case was manifested in flesh, and became ‘substitutionally’ animal, guilty, condemned, weak, mortal; but at the same time ‘personally’ spiritual, holy, just, powerful, and immortal.”

—Walter Scott, in his book, *He Nekrosis, or the Death of Christ*, 1853, p. 71.

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler

EPHESIANS 4:1-32

Preaching and teaching the revelation of God is the ONLY practical way to bring unity to the church. Paul wrote his most “teach-a-fying” epistle, to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians), to attempt to bring about unity to a disunited church! The Corinthians were disunited on everything from church-leadership (ch. 1-4) to morals (ch. 5-6) to the sacredness of marriage (ch. 7), what to do about too much scrupulousness and not enough (8-9-10), the hierarchy of male and female (11), the Lord’s Supper (11), miraculous, spiritual gifts (12-13-14) the resurrection of the body (15) and Christian giving (16). NOW THAT WAS A DISUNITED CHURCH. Half of the problems (except revealed morality, 5-6 and revealed doctrine, 7,11,12,13,14,15) were in the realm of scruples, opinions, methods, and spiritual maturation. The great Restoration Movement, it has been labeled the “Stone-Campbell Movement,” by Leroy Garrett, began as a preaching, teaching movement emphasizing a disavowal of human creeds and a return to the Bible only as a rule of faith and practice. It was at the very first, an attempt to get some of the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, etc., to return to proper exegetical and hermeneutic principles of interpreting the Scriptures. THAT WAS THE BASIS BECAUSE THOSE EARLY “BIBLE-ONLY” ADVOCATES KNEW IF THEY COULD GET THAT AS THEIR “TOUCH-STONE,” THE CHRISTIAN UNITY OF ALL WHO BELIEVED IT WOULD LOGICALLY FOLLOW! This “movement” toward the “ancient order” (i.e., Bible only) was characterized almost exclusively by expository preaching. Restoration preachers took a sizeable text directly from the Bible and preached what the author intended to say in THAT text, using all the proper rules of interpretation {hermeneutics} rather than making up a “topic” and then finding “proof texts” from all over the Bible to corroborate the “topic”. If the church neglects or slights the expository teaching and preaching of the Word of God, it neglects unifying the church and consequently neglects building the church. PEOPLE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE BEFORE UNITY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT BECOMES A REALITY! The Spirit is one; God is one; the faith (apostolic doctrine) is one; the Christian hope is one, the Christian body is one, the Christian calling is one and baptism is one. BUILDING THE CHURCH THROUGH UNITY IN CHRIST IS NOT OPTIONAL—IT IS HER CALLING. Paul used the Greek word axios when he said Christians should lead a life worthy of their calling (4:1). Axios means “value, worth”—it is the word from which we get axiom. Christians must live according to the value they place on their “calling”. The Christian “calling” is succinctly encapsulated in ONE VERSE—Romans 8:29. In Romans 8:28 we are told that God works everything for good to those who....are called according to his purposes. Then in 8:29 Paul continues, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...” OUR CALLING IS “TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST.” Consequently, we should give diligence, be eager, and earnest to maintain unity in Christ. Neither by our power, our expertise, nor our effectiveness does the church have unity. The “unity” is already there “in Christ” but we are charged with “maintaining” it! When we are baptized (immersed) and “united with Christ in his death and resurrection” (Rom. 6:1-5)—we are spontaneously united to Christ’s “body”—the universal

church throughout the world and in heaven! THE WORK OF THE “MINISTRY OF THE WORD” IN BIBLICAL TEACHING AND PREACHING IS THE METHOD BY WHICH INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS ARE “MAINTAINED” IN THE “UNITY” THEY ALREADY HAVE IN CHRIST WITH THE REST OF HIS “BODY.” The unity of the body of Christ, by the way, is the greatest tool of evangelism the church has—as Jesus prayed, “...that they all be one...so that the world may believe that thou has sent me” (John 17:20-21). HOW CAN WE EXPECT TO BUILD THE CHURCH UNTIL WE ARE EARNESTLY MAINTAINING HER UNITY IN CHRIST?

The main purpose of Christ’s gifts of ministry, is INDOCTRINATION. IT IS THAT CHRIST “MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS.” Christ’s gifts were: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (elders), and teachers. The first two were for the first century church only. The last three are for the church in every generation until Jesus comes again. Christian indoctrination is more than a mere filling of the mind with data. It is inoculating, inserting, implanting, infusing, ingrafting, the personality (Spirit) of Jesus Christ into the personality (spirit) of a human being—IT IS THE “NEW BIRTH” (John 3:1-15); IT IS “EATING THE FLESH AND DRINKING THE BLOOD” OF JESUS, i.e., EATING THE “BREAD OF LIFE” (John 6:35-63); IT IS BEING “TRANSFORMED, CONFORMED, CHANGED INTO CHRIST’S IMAGE, FROM ONE DEGREE OF GLORY TO ANOTHER...” (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:1-2; Rom. 8:29). IT IS BECOMING A “NEW CREATION” (2 Cor. 5:14-21). So, there’s no reason in Christ’s church today for an evangelist, elder, or teacher to get “swelled up” about their ministries. They are just tools to produce the FILLING OF CHRIST IN “ALL THINGS”(Col. 1:24-29) . The process or method these evangelists, elders, and teachers is to use is that of equipping the saints. The Greek word *katartismos*, translated, “equipment” in 4:12, is the noun form of the verb *katartizo*, which means “to put in order, restore, mend, put into proper condition, to prepare, make ready. In Luke 6:40 it is translated, “...but every one (every disciple) when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.” Equipping the saints is done by fully teaching them! It can only be done by indoctrination. That (“indoctrination”) is a “four-letter-word” in the world of the intelligensia—in academe—today! Americans do not like to believe anyone is “indoctrinating” them! They believe that “indoctrination” means they are “spoon-fed” data so that they are not permitted to “think for themselves.” They don’t seem to understand that all their media (the TV, movies, newspapers, magazines, publishers) their public school, their government, and their commercial world is very busily INDOCTRINATING them every day of their lives! The secular world survives only by inoculating, implanting, infusing, ingrafting its fleshly, carnal, physical nature into the minds of its victims! If all the secular world allowed itself to be inoculated with the Spirit of Christ, we would almost have heaven on earth! Actually, one of the reasons for the failures of the modern American public educational system today is its adamant refusal to indoctrinate youngsters with the doctrines of the multiplication tables, the rules of language (grammar, syntax, parsing, etc.), the rules of logic, the rules of good music, art, literature, and reading! Most modern educators today have apoplexy at the very mention of learning the “rules” or learning by rote! They wouldn’t dare “feed” a child the “rules” today by making them memorize things—that would be indoctrinating children! It would warp their little psyches. So they get their pupils in a circle and ask them what they think about this and that and a jillion other things! The pupils don’t have the tools with which to think until they are indoctrinated! Just this week in *World* magazine (10-15-99): “The Education Department

(U.S. gov.) Reports that only 1 in 4 of the nation's public school children knows enough to write a competent term paper. Testers asked 60,000 4th graders, 8th graders, and 12th graders to write stories and reports about events or experiences. When the scores were added up by the quasi-governmental National Assessment Governing board (NAGB), roughly 1 in 4 students in each grade level was proficient enough to deliver a solid academic performance and write competently about a challenging subject. Evaluators considered those students proficient who could organize thoughts, choose words well, spell correctly, and consistently use good grammar. Only about 1% performed at a level testers considered "advanced." Only about 1 in 3, 4th and 12th grader private-school students wrote at a level considered "proficient" by evaluators—50% of 8th graders in private schools performed proficiently. Education Secretary Richard Riley...used the news to push for more federal funding for education, and said: "If we don't [spend more], we will never reduce the large number of high school graduates who have to take remedial writing classes in college." The Joplin Globe, 12-22-10, published an Assoc. Press release that "Nearly one-fourth of the students who try to join the U.S. Army fail its entrance exam, painting a grim picture of an education system that produces graduates who can't answer basic math, science and reading questions, according to a new study released 12-21-10...Questions are often basic such as: 'If 2 plus x equals 4, what is the value of x?'...Recruits must score at least a 31 out of 99 (that's less than 30% ptb) on the first stage of the three-hour test to get into the Army...one educator said, 'It's surprising and shocking that we are still having students who are walking across the stage who really don't deserve to be and haven't earned that right.'" The same principle holds true in the church. The Bible school hour is not a "happy-hour" when all Christians go to their classrooms to decide what they think about God and his word. It is the hour when all Christians go to their classrooms to learn, by rote ("repetition, over and over and over again") what God and his word thinks about them, and the church, and the world! Biblical illiteracy among Christian Church people today is appalling! In his book, Walter Scott, Voice of the Golden Oracle, 1946, reprinted by College Press, (another book every Christian should read) Dwight E. Stevenson, writes that the early members of the churches of the "Restoration Movement" (then called "Reformed Baptists") "memorized (their Bibles) and quoted it until they became known as 'walking Bibles.'" (p. 103); and a woman who had heard Scott (and others) preach told her sister, "...they talk like the Bible reads; they surely are the people of God." But did you know that after 30 years as Registrar of Ozark Christian College, testing the Bible knowledge of incoming Christian Church freshmen every year—the scores CONTINUALLY averaged only 39-40% out of a possible 100% (70% would be barely passing) on a simple Bible-knowledge test from the American Association of Bible Colleges (accrediting association)! I have given this same test to adults in Sunday School classes in the Christian Church and they do not fare any better! IF THE SAINTS ARE NOT EQUIPPED, THE EVANGELISTS, ELDERS, AND TEACHERS HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING THAT'S DONE FOR THE CHURCH AND BY THE CHURCH! But Jesus said he was going to return to earth some day and it would be like "a man having gone on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, EACH WITH HIS OWN WORK..." Mark 13:32-37— ALL CHURCH MEMBERS HAD BETTER READ THIS PARABLE AND GET THEIR MINISTERS TO EQUIP THEM AND THEN GO, GET TO WORK AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST IN SAVING SOULS!

The church (the “body” of Christ) was created and is designed to function much like a human body. The church’s “head” is, of course, Jesus Christ. Everyone else in the church is some kind of “functioning” extension or organ...an arm, a leg, an eye, an ear, a mouth, a foot. Some “members” (arms, legs, mouths, etc.) are more “high profile” than others...BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THE “LOW PROFILE” MEMBERS ARE LESS IMPORTANT. In fact, Paul writes in 1 Cor. 12:22-25 “On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.” SO, YOU SEE, IT DOESN’T MATTER WHAT “WORK” YOU ARE DOING AS A MEMBER, SO LONG AS YOU ARE WORKING ACCORDING TO THE “HEAD’S” INSTRUCTIONS AND DOING IT WITH LOVE AND SINCERITY. In Romans 12:4-8 Paul writes, “For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.” Some will be “prophets” (means “preachers” here—not predictors), some will “shepherd,” i.e., elders, some will teach, some will exhort, some will contribute, some will give aid, some will do acts of mercy. But no one should think of himself more highly than he ought to think....but to think with sober judgment. No “member” of the body should be judged as “not a member” simply because he doesn’t function like another member. Neither should one member nor a few members, be doing ALL the functioning. Some have more time; some have more resources; some have more expertise. BUT EACH MEMBER HAS SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH! And each member is to work “effectively.” The Greek verb *energeian*, in 4:16 is translated “effectual” in the KJV but is better translated “when each part is working properly...” in the RSV. The Greek verb means literally, “able work, work that accomplishes—*energeian* is used in Heb. 4:12 to refer to the Word of God as “active and powerful.” God’s word has the power to achieve results. Jesus teaches in the Gospels that his “servants” are to be faithful, effective, shrewd, productive, proficient, and skilled “stewards.” The work of the ministry is to equip the saints to be such stewards and the saints are to see to themselves that they “grow up into Christ,” into such a stewardship. THE MOST PRACTICAL WAY FOR THE CHURCH TO BE BUILT IS TO EQUIP THE SAINTS. EQUIPPING THE SAINTS MEANS TO SEE THAT ALL DISCERN THE TRUTH. DISCERNING THE TRUTH IS FUNDAMENTALLY A MATTER OF INDOCTRINATION. THUS, THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY IS INDOCTRINATION! (see Acts 6:4; 28:18-32).

Interesting—isn’t it—that from God’s perspective, the empty-minded, vain, ignorant person in the world is the unbeliever no matter how erudite and educated he may be!! And the person who knows God’s word, believes it and practices it, has a clearer, more practical grasp of truth than all the unbelieving philosophers, scientists, psychiatrists, sociologists, and politicians put together! The Greek word translated “futility” is *mataioteti*, is also translated, “futile, vain, foolish, faulty, to no purpose” and is the same Greek word Paul used in Romans 1:21-22 to write, “...for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but became futile (Gr. *mataioteti*) in their thinking and their senseless (Greek

asunetos, “mindless, foolish, without understanding”) minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools (Gr. emoranthesan the English word “moron” comes from this)...” ARE THERE “FOOLS” IN THE WORLD? INDEED! GOD HAS SAID SO! THERE ARE MILLIONS, YEA BILLIONS, OF PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD, IN EVERY CENTURY, CLAIMING TO BE WISE BUT THEY ARE futile, senseless, foolish PEOPLE, LIVING FUTILE, SENSELESS, FOOLISH LIVES! “They are alienated (separated) from the life of God because of the IGNORANCE that is in them, due to THEIR HARDNESS OF HEART...” Now isn’t that an interesting sentence!!! Anyone who thinks and lives as those Gentiles did without Christ (say in Ephesus, or Rome, or Corinth) in the days of the apostle Paul, is ignorant, separated from God, and hard in heart! If you would like to see HOW hard in heart their ignorance and alienation from God made them, read all of Romans 1:18-32!!! It ends describing them as “foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.” They have no sense, no concern, no compassion, no mercy. They are cold, hard cruel, heinous, barbaric, brutal, fierce, and vicious. This is what “Gentiles” were in their hearts when alienated from God. ONLY THEIR GOVERNMENT LAWS KEPT THEM IN CHECK. IT IS THE SAME TODAY! UNTIL A PERSON IS “TRANSFORMED, RE-BORN, REGENERATED, CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST,” HE HAS THIS VICIOUS, ANIMALISTIC, RUTHLESS DISPOSITION LURKING JUST UNDER THE SURFACE FROM FEAR OF THE LAW AND PUNISHMENT. And, on occasion, (more today than we many would believe possible in a prosperous, free, “religious” America) this heinous, brutal creature breaks over the bounds of fear of the law and pounces on unsuspecting victims, rending, tearing, killing and devouring anyone in it’s way! Children who are indoctrinated in the public schools only with secular data, remain “children” in society (low esteem, low jobs, low pay, vulnerable to being duped, etc., etc.). “Children” of Christ in the church, if not indoctrinated sufficiently, REMAIN CHILDREN. And the NT warns against an immature, mental and spiritual condition (here in Eph. 4:14-16) (see also 1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-13) The Greek phrase in 4:14 is hina meketi omen nepioi, and reads, literally, “in order that no more we may be infants...” The verb meketi (“be”) is in the subjunctive mood which is the “mood of contingency” i.e., to no longer be spiritual “runts” or “babies” is contingent upon (depends upon) whether Christians are subjected to the “equipping ministry” of evangelists, elders, and teachers or not! IS THE BIBLE SCHOOL (I.E., SUNDAY SCHOOL) IMPORTANT, OR WHAT?! In many Christian Churches today, the Sunday morning sermon and worship service is geared more to “celebration” than indoctrination, edification, and teaching. And, by the way whoever started using that word “celebrate” for the services of the NT Church needs to know there is no word “celebrate” in the NT and “celebrate” is found only 3 times in the OT-- Lev. 23:32; 23:41; Isa. 38:18—two of those have to do with the seventh day of the week, the Mosaic Sabbath, and Isa. 38:18 is Hezekiah’s “lament” that if he dies and goes to Sheol, he cannot be “praised” or “celebrated” there)—I think today’s “Christian- mod-squads” are “ga-ga” over “celebration” because they want to turn the services of the church into some continual emotional binge instead of what they are really for—indoctrinating, instructing, edifying, teaching. Paul says that is THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST’S “GIFTS” OF MINISTRY GIVEN TO THE CHURCH! Babies live on, thrive on, and see everything from emotional perspectives. The powers of sober, serious thinking and reasoning take quite a while to develop in children. Most children, unless “taken under tow” early in life become self-centered, narcissistic, spoiled, libertine brats. AND THE SAME APPLIES TO “BABES” IN CHRIST UNLESS THEY ARE SUBJECTED TO THE

MINISTRY OF EQUIPPING AND EDIFYING! Now whose fault is it when children in a family, or “children” in the “household of God” become libertine brats? In families, the fault lies mainly with parents....in the church the fault lies mainly with evangelists, elders, and teachers. THE ONLY “PROGRAM” THAT COUNTS IN THE CHURCH IS THE MINISTRY OF EQUIPPING AND EDIFYING AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE TWO WHICH IS EVANGELIZING!

The aorist Greek verb *emathete*, in 4:20 (from *manthano*, “to disciple”) should be translated, “learned.” It means to become indoctrinated, to learn by understanding and practice. The church’s business is indoctrinating people and insisting they “learn” Christ by making sure they learn about him from the Scriptures, and then by applying their knowledge about him in their every-day living, at work or at play, in the home or away from the home. That’s what the “work” of the church’s ministry is all about! Paul uses the Greek aorist verb *edidachthete*, in 4:21, which is translated correctly “taught.” It is from the verb *didasko*, “to give instruction, to teach.” THOSE WHO REFUSE CHRISTIAN “INDOCTRINATION” BECOME LIKE THE “GENTILES” OF PAUL’S DAY----futile in their thinking, darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life which is in God, ignorant, hard-hearted, callous and give themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness! Watch the Hindus bathe in the sewage infested Ganges and worship cows; watch the Muslims kill fellow-Muslims who convert to Christianity or any other religion; watch the Buddhists take little bowls of rice and meat to a shrine to feed the “gods” and their “ancestors” who have died; watch Zionist Jews do underhanded, violent things to keep the “nation of Israel” alive; watch the non-Christians, and nominal-Christians of America go into credit-card debt of 10s of 1000s of dollars just “because I wanted it”—watch them destroy their bodies and souls with every kind of fleshly indulgence that can be thought up; watch them kill one another for a “fix” to get “high;” watch them abort babies by the millions; watch them booze and kill one another on the highways by the 10’s of 1000s each year; watch them hate other people because of the color of their skin or their racial origins; watch them prostitute human sexuality with every kind of perversion imaginable. Most Americans have been reared with the idea that they don’t want to be “indoctrinated” with religion, they don’t have to, and they won’t! Besides, they know and learn about God from within themselves better than they could by “going to church.” Besides, who gave any preacher, elder, or Bible teacher the right to say he knows more about the Bible than any other American? EVERYBODY HAS SOME TRUTH—BUT NOBODY HAS ALL THE TRUTH—RIGHT?! WRONG! God places his premium on people who are teachable, whether poor or rich, insecure or secure, enslaved or free, filled or hungry. THE INTRACTABLE, THE UNYIELDING, THE FRACTIOUS ARE THOSE FROM WHOM GOD TURNS AWAY (Titus 3:10). The church will be built, must be built, out of the teachable of this world. THINK ABOUT IT—THOSE WHO COME TO THE CHURCH FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN TO BE TAUGHT ARE NOT REALLY BEING BUILT INTO THE CHURCH. 2000 attendance at church with less than 50% in Bible School is nothing to brag about!

The new man of Eph. 4:24ff is also known as a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:14-21); or “born-again, born anew.” It is none other than a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, “being

renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator” (Col. 3:10), conformed to the image of God’s Son (Rom. 8:29), changed into the image of the Son” from one degree of glory to another kind-of-person (2 Co. 3:18)! The “new man” sees everything and everyone from God’s viewpoint in the Scriptures (2 Cor. 5:15-17). The new man is the one who has partaken of the divine nature of God through the knowledge of Christ and his precious promises (2 Pet. 1:3-11). Then he adds virtue, knowledge, self-control, etc. to his character. Paul described the “new man” for the Christians at Colossae (Col. 3 & 4) in much the same vocabulary as he did the the Ephesians. But the MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE IS: How do we put on the “new man?” REMEMBER THIS—IT IS NOT DONE ALL AT ONCE. One “puts off the old man and puts on the new man all during the Christian experience—it is “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18). Of course, there is a starting point—that is at the watery grave and resurrection of baptism (immersion) (John 3:3-8; Col. 3:27-29). But Paul describes the matter as a continuing process of edification, indoctrination, “renewing in mind” in both Eph. 4:22-24 and Col. 3:10). Putting on the “new man” is through mental action, NOT miraculous passiveness. Of course, the divine Spirit of God operates on our minds through his word, and that is supernatural. We are not renewed simply by mental powers on our own---but we are not renewed without the active exercise of our minds—thinking God’s thoughts, believing God’s promises.” “REASON DECIDING THE TESTIMONY (OF THE NT) IS TRUE, IS BELIEVING” said Alexander Campbell. Paul says we may be “transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Rom. 12:1-2); Peter says we are “born anew...through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23); Paul says we are to “try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord” (Eph. 5:10). Paul says we are to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). So, you see, putting off the “old man” and putting on the “new man” is a very practical exercise. It is discerning the truth so as to believe it, and obey it. There’s nothing mystical or enigmatic about it. God has provided the power (his word). We simply read it, believe it and do it, and the new man is begun to be put on!

YES! CHRISTIANS ARE “REALLY” TO SPEAK THE TRUTH TO ONE ANOTHER! Because we are “members” one of another. Would you want one or two of the members of your body to be continually deceiving the rest of the body? Would you want to live in a household (family) where each member lied to one another continually, or even occasionally, and cheated or deceived one another??? Would you want a member of your family withhold from you some very important truth he alone knows? Read the Gospels again and be amazed (even shocked) at the straightforwardness, absolute truthfulness with which Jesus talked to people—no matter who they were (his mother, his friends, his enemies, those of high rank, those of gutter-rank). And you can’t read the Acts and the Epistles without being amazed about the direct, satirical, chiding, language often used by the apostles in their letters to Christians to speak the truth in LOVE! But above all we must speak the TRUTH. Paul said enemies lie to one another, friends speak the truth (Gal. 4:16). We must FIRST be honest with ourselves—only the honest and good heart will receive the word of God (Lk. 8:15). Whatever we do, let us never be guilty of disbelieving something because it is the truth (John 8:45). THE CHURCH CANNOT BE BUILT ON DECEPTION, HALF-TRUTHS, LIES, CHEATING, DISHONESTY. PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION IS JUST ANOTHER FORM OF LYING, DECEIVING AND CHEATING PEOPLE! And even when Christians speak the truth with one another, some are apt to get angry about the truth.

One gets angry but does not sin when one is mature enough to do so! The Greek verb translated anger is *orgizesthe*, is imperative present middle or passive, 2 per. pl. That means you are ordered by God's word to get angry at appropriate times and appropriate things. God created man with the capacity to be angry. We are to abhor the very appearance of evil. God is said to be angry, wrathful, offended, provoked, etc. in the OT and in Revelation. Jesus became "angry" (Mk. 3:5) at hardness of heart. However, the Greek verb translated do not sin is *hamartanete*, and is also imperative present active 2 per. pl. So we are commanded to get angry and commanded to not sin when we become angry. Is that possible? Yes! Jesus was—"he looked around on them in anger..." Mark 3:5 and Mark uses *orges* the same word Paul used here. Peter pronounced God's wrath upon Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5); upon Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8); Paul was wrathful toward Elymas the magician (Acts 13). All the writers of the NT wrote in caustic, angry, and stinging words at appropriate times to their Christian brethren. BUT IT WAS ALL UNDER EMOTIONAL CONTROL. That is the secret to being angry and not sinning. Keeping the emotions in check. What the writers of the NT did was speak angrily "in love." Was Paul the enemy of the Galatians for telling them the truth? (Gal. 4:16). Was he the enemy of the Corinthians for speaking so bluntly and harshly to them? Civil rulers and judges have to be wrathful without sinning (Rom. 13:1-7) and so do Christians (see also the OT phrase, "you shall have no pity upon them..." meaning, judgments and punishments are to be meted out impartially Deut. 7:16; 13:8-9; 19:13; 19:21; 25:11-12). EMOTIONAL STABILITY IS THE KEY TO THIS APOSTOLIC COMMAND! If we did not have the God-given capacity to BE angry, we would never shun sin in ourselves or be motivated to correct it out of love in others! We just wouldn't care! Better to be angry than not to care about unrighteousness, unfairness, unmitigated wickedness.

Christians are to be industrious. Christians are not to be thieves or free-loaders or lazy. Study the Proverbs if you want to know what God thinks of lazy, rebellious, free-loaders—God calls them fools! And so does most of mankind! Christians are to work with their hands, doing honest work, so that they may be able to give to those in need Eph. 4:18. YES! THE PURITAN WORK ETHIC IS A PART OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE! (2 Thess. 3:6-15). Christians are to aspire to live quietly, to mind their own affairs, to work with their hands, be dependent on nobody, so they may command the respect of "outsiders" (1 Thess. 4:10-12). Christians are to make money in order to give to those in need so they won't be dependent on someone else for their sustenance, and so "outsiders" (unbelievers) will HAVE to respect them. What else is money for? No one takes one red cent beyond this life unless he invests it in people (see Luke 16:8-9). The reason for making money to give it to someone else includes, of course, first, one's own family (1 Tim. 5:8).

Paul says that bitterness, anger, wrath, clamor, and blasphemy are what GRIEVES the Holy Spirit of God (the Greek word for "blasphemy" is *blasphemia*). Actually, Jesus defined blasphemy as "attributing evil, i.e., the devil, as the source for what is good, or v.v., attributing to the devil as its source that which is beyond question a good thing, Matt. 12). These all fall under the umbrella of "irreverence." How does a child grieve the spirit of a parent? By being impertinent, impudent, rebellious, irreverent and disrespectful. God is our

Father, not our “buddy,” not our “pal,” not someone we can be presumptuous, brash, brazen, disrespectful, and irreverent toward. God deserves our reverence, respect, and loving response. There is no irreverence, no disrespect, no familiarity of creatures toward the Creator in heaven (see Rev. 4:1-11; 5:1-14; 7:13-17; 11:15-18; 15:2-4; 19:1-8). In heaven there is not one moment’s hesitation in obeying God—not one moment of flippancy—not one moment of rowdiness or unrestrained goofiness—not one moment of worshipping or expressing what God doesn’t want expressed! READ IT FOR YOURSELF! COULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT TOO MUCH IRREVERENCE AND TOO MUCH FAMILIARITY MAY BE STIFLING THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN OUR TIME? The church will be built when more reverence and respect is shown for God, for his Son, for his Holy Spirit, and for his Word. CHRISTIANS ARE TOLD THEY MUST BE TAUGHT HOW TO BEHAVE IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD! (1 Tim. 3:15). The church, the body of Christ is no place for pandemonium, confusion, disorder, chaos, or unsettlement. (see 1 Cor. 14:1-40). Everything is to be “done decently and in order” (and the Greek word translated is taxin, meaning “an arranging, arrangement, fixed succession or course—taxin comes from tagma, which is a military term speaking of “ordered ranks, orderly drilling of the troops, things done according to the military way”). Many people today think that disorder, rearranging the order of things, unsettling the normal order, is a spirituality “next to godliness.” NOT SO! NOT IN GOD’S CHURCH! Just read 1 Cor. 11-14!

The Greek word translated kind is chrestoi. It is the same word Matthew used to record Jesus’ Great Invitation “For my yoke is easy (or gentle) (Gr. chrestos)” Matt. 11:30. Christians are to be gentle and easy with one another. They are to be eusplangchnoi, “tenderhearted” toward one another. Literally, eusplangchnoi, means, “good-bowels” because the “bowels were regarded by the Greeks as the seat of the more violent passions, by the Hebrews as the seat of the tender affections,” says W. E. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. NOW CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE “TENDERLY AFFECTIONED” TOWARD ONE ANOTHER WHILE STILL DOING ALL THAT PAUL HAS SAID IN EPHESIANS 4 EARLIER such as “speaking truth with your neighbor, being angry but not sinning, work to earn money to give to those in need, speak only gracious words, don’t grieve the Holy Spirit of God by irreverence and disrespect, etc. And we haven’t even begun to look at Ephesians 5 & 6 yet! SO IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE ANGRY AND GENTLE AT THE SAME TIME?! It must be or Paul would not have said it—we have to find out how! To be tenderhearted can’t be done unless we are willing to learn, or try to learn, and try to experience the feelings of others! Forgiving (Greek, charizomenoi, means “giving grace to others, as you have been given grace.” FORGIVENESS IS PURE, UNEARNED, UNADULTERATED GRACE! Forgiveness is not “getting even.” To forgive, the one who is hurt must bear the hurt, indeed, must lovingly take the hurt. The one cheated must pay the price in order to really forgive! THAT’S HOW GOD, IN CHRIST, FORGAVE US! A Christian is to welcome others as Christ has welcomed him! (Rom. 15:7). Try that one on for size!

WHEN ALL THIS HAPPENS, THE CHURCH WILL BE BUILT. LET NO MAN SAY

HE HAS DISCERNED THE TRUTH UNLESS HE PRACTICES THE TRUTH. Truth is practical (practice-able). Truth is not some ephemeral ideal that keeps eluding the searching of philosophers. It begins in the mind, of course, but it ends in the mouth, in the hands, and in the feet; it is not just something to talk about, it is something to do! BECAUSE TRUTH IS LOVE, AND LOVE IS TRUTH! If we discern the truth we will discern Jesus for he said, "I am the way, the truth and the life....TRUTH IS A PERSON, A GOOD PERSON, A LOVING PERSON, A FAITHFUL PERSON, A SINLESS PERSON, A DIVINE PERSON. TRUTH IS ALIVE, IT IS AND DOES GOOD! TRUTH IS LIFE, IT IS BEING! TRUTH IS TO BE LIVED OUT NOT SHELTERED IN!

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler

EPHESIANS 5:1-33

Darkness, in the Bible, symbolizes ignorance, wickedness, Satan, hell, and separation from God. Light, symbolizes truth, knowledge, holiness, God, Christ and the church and heaven. The church is built when light **DISPELS** (i.e., expels, ousts, expunges, eradicates) darkness. Paul wrote, "He (Christ) has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son..." (Col. 1:13). Peter wrote that Christ "called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). Paul preached to Agrippa that God had sent him to the Gentiles to "open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." (Acts 26:18). Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the "god of this world (the pretending god—Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" but the same God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has "shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." (2 Cor. 4:1-6). Jesus said to his disciples (the church), "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN**, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14-16). The Old Testament prophets said a great deal about the Messianic age (the church) being the light that would dispel darkness: e.g. Isa. 9:2; 58:8; 60:1ff.

If the church is to be built it can only be by dispelling darkness with light. We all were "once darkness but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of "light" (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true)" (Eph. 5:8-9) while earlier, the text says, "Be sure of this, that no immoral or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." (Eph. 5:5). **BUT HOW DOES THE CHURCH DISPEL THE DARKNESS? DO WE HAVE DIRECTION—DIVINE DIRECTION FOR THIS TASK? YES, INDEED! THAT IS WHAT OUR TEXT SAYS!**

the life of Jesus Christ. CHRIST WAS GOD IN THE FLESH, the only unique (Gr. monogenes, KJV translates, “only begotten”) Son of God. Jesus was the True Light who enlightens every man...and he was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not.” (John 1:9-10). People who do evil, hate the light, and will not come to the light lest their deeds should be exposed (John 3:19-21). THERE IS NO LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT HOW GOD WOULD ACT! It is in the Bible from Genesis through Revelation, but especially in the Gospels, for that is a record of God living among humans, as a human, showing humans how he acted and how he wanted humans to act! THE PROBLEM IS THAT THOSE WHO LOVE SELF, LOVE REBELLION AGAINST GOD, AND WICKEDNESS, DON'T WANT TO KNOW HOW TO IMITATE GOD! In the human dimension, a child who is “beloved” (truly loved, not just pampered and spoiled), will want to imitate his/her parents. They begin to do that very thing when they are infants—smiling back at “mama,” going back at “papa” like he goes at them. Jesus is the light of the world and whoever follows him will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12; see also John 9:5; 12:35-36). Christians are to be lights in the darkness, too, (Matt. 5:14; 1 Thess. 5:5). Wherever God’s word went in the OT by the prophets it exposed the darkness. Wherever God’s Incarnate Word (Jesus) went in the NT accounts he exposed the darkness. Wherever God’s Holy Spirit went in his Word through the apostles, he exposed the darkness. IF GOD CAME TO EARTH, HOW WOULD HE ACT? WE DO NOT NEED TO WONDER OR GUESS! JUST READ THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS—HE WAS HERE—AND HE ACTED—IN THE FLESH! We, in the flesh, CAN imitate all of his life except the supernatural powers he possessed. If we can’t imitate Christ’s life Peter was wrong when he said, “He (Christ) left us an example that we should follow in his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). We CAN imitate his faith, his courage, his love for God, for the word of God and for all human beings. We CAN emulate his righteousness, his fairness, his integrity, truthfulness, humility and selflessness. . Remember, God ordained that all who want to go to heaven are to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29). “Be conformed” does not mean, “make a stab at it, even though you can’t ever do it.” Paul wrote the Corinthians, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul used the Greek word, ginesthe, as the verb “Be” in this sentence which is in the imperative mood—an apostolic command, not merely a suggestion. Do you remember the social scene of ancient Corinth and the former life of some of the Corinthian Christian converts (1Cor. 6:9-11?). If the apostle Paul could “demand” of the Corinthians that they imitate him as he imitated Christ, he certainly would “demand” it of us today! 1 Cor. 11:1 was actually the conclusion to what he had said in 1 Cor. chapters 5-6-7-8-9-10 and the introduction to what he would say in chapters 11-16! Could the church ever be guilty of imitating the ungodly? YES! Read Revelation’s “letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor (Rev. ch. 2 & 3), and Paul’s letters to the Corinthians.

pleonektes, is the Greek word translated “covetous.” Literally, it means “one who wants more, more, more, always more, even if it means having what belongs to others. Covetousness is listed among those things that “must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints.” 5:3. Covetousness is synonymous with idolatry (idolatry is blaspheming God) and was punishable by death in an Israelite. Covetousness is a forfeiture of one’s inheritance in the kingdom of Christ! 5:5. There can’t be even the slightest hint of covetousness (always wanting more) in members of Christ’s church. Such an attitude and

behavior has no pertinency to the kingdom of God; it is not fitting, not proper, not in harmony with the Christian life. Covetousness is synonymous with idolatry because a covetous person makes money (or things that money can buy) his god! Jesus called such a state of mind, “serving Mammon” (“mammon” is a word from Chaldea or Babylon—modern Iraq, meaning, “wealth”). One would have to say the rich young ruler worshiped “mammon” (Matt. 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23). Notice that all 3 synoptic Gospels have this account, and only a few incidents in Jesus’ life and ministry are recorded in 3 gospel records; the rich fool-of-a-farmer in Luke 12; the rich man who fared sumptuously in Luke 16; and the prodigal son, until he came to himself Luke 15. Some people “covet” power; some “covet” riches; some “covet” fame (any uncontrolled lust is covetousness). BUT IT’S UN-AMERICAN NOT TO WANT EVERYTHING YOU CAN GET FOR YOUR FAMILY’S FUTURE—ISN’T IT? Covetousness has very nearly become a way of life for most Americans! Most American’s (perhaps some Christians included) have never “learned to be content” (see Phil. 4:11-13). Yet, “there is great gain in godliness with contentment” (1 Tim. 6:6). Most Americans think “contentment” is the by-product of great wealth, or the top position of power, or becoming the top celebrity of the nation. Have you ever read Nicholas Nickleby, by Charles Dickens? Just ask most of “them that’s got it” and they’ll tell you it isn’t so great after all! They have to constantly “worry” and “fret” about keeping others from stealing what they have, murdering them for their money, or kidnapping their children, or never having a moment of privacy, etc. etc. But in addition to the “hell” covetousness and envy will bring in this life, it will also, not repented of, bring an even worse “hell” for all eternity!

Again, Paul uses the Greek imperative mood to order the Ephesians to “not be deceived” (Greek, *apatato*). Christians are urged, charged, commanded to keep themselves from being deceived! Now that’s a strange way to put it—isn’t it? NO! Most deception comes because the “deceiv-ee” wanted the “deceiv-er” to deceive him/her. Christians cannot sit back and expect someone else to keep them from being deceived. Each Christian is responsible for himself. It is something each Christian must do as his part in being a “light of the world” that is dispelling darkness. There is as much, if not more, emphasis in the NT put upon the responsibility of individual human beings to yearn for, search for, find, and heed the truth, as there is on the responsibility of someone to take the truth to those who don’t have it! Jesus consistently ended his teachings with, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (A) Learn to distinguish between words of substance, truth, and love—and words of vanity, falsehood, and lust. Deception comes through “empty words.” “Empty words” have no substance, no meaning, no relationship to reality and reason; no basis in truth. The “evolutionary hypothesis” is all “empty words.” False theology is gobbledy-gook and nothing but “empty words.” Human bragging, boasting, predicting, cursing words are “empty words” because no human being can assure their fulfillment. (B) Do not become “bosom-buddies” with those who live in darkness (wickedness, rebellion, falsehood). Associate as much as possible with the children of light (Christians). Deception comes by associating with darkness and with those who live in darkness. “Associating” (Greek, *summetochoi*) here does not mean the necessary associations we must have with people in darkness in the ordinary affairs of life (see 1 Cor. 5:9-11). Paul uses this compound Greek word, *summetochoi*, from *sum* meaning “with,” and *metochos* meaning “partnership,” FOR EMPHASIS. We are not to join in a PARTNERSHIP with those who live in darkness. Paul’s use of the Greek word

ginesthe, is not very well translated in any version. He literally says, “Do not even think about a “partnership” with the “sons of disobedience.” Once again, the verb ginesthe (“think”) is in the imperative mood. Everyone has heard the old saying, “If you play with fire, you will get burned.” (C) Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. That is a guaranteed guard against deception. The Greek word dokimazontez, is translated, “try to learn...” but is literally, “proving.” It means to “examine, test, and verify” what is pleasing to the Lord. The word dokimazontes is a present tense, active voice, imperative mood participle. If Paul had been saying, “Try to learn...” it certainly seems like he would have used the subjunctive mood, passive voice. Literally, Paul says, “Proving what is pleasing to the Lord.” Paul assumes there are only two alternatives in life. Either you are partners with those who work darkness, or you are presently and constantly examining and testing everything in life to see if it is pleasing to the Lord. But what is the “touchstone” by which everything is tested to see if it pleases the Lord? THE BIBLE, OF COURSE! THAT IS THE ONLY PLACE THE LORD HAS REVEALED WHAT PLEASURES HIM! We certainly cannot use human opinions; we certainly must not evaluate things according to our own feelings; Paul did not say try to learn what pleases YOU!

Indeed, all Christians must be actively engaged in exposing darkness? Christians are the “light of the world.” Just as a flashlight turned on exposes anything lurking in the darkness, so do the “good works” of the Christian as the world of darkness becomes exposed to the light of the character of our Heavenly Father. Once again, the Greek verb in 5:11 egelchete, translated “expose,” is in the imperative mood. Everything Paul says in Ephesians, is imperative to the building of the church. I believe that the church is NOT growing as it should BECAUSE she has taken lightly what Paul said to the church at Ephesus! When one considers the disadvantages the church had in the first century compared to the advantages the church has in the 21st century, one should be appalled at the lack of growth produced by the Lord’s church. The word eglechete “exposed” means, “put on trial, refute and convict as in a trial.” Christians, all Christians, are to put darkness on PUBLIC trial (2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2) by using light. IT IS NOT OPTIONAL FOR THE CHURCH! IT IS AN APOSTOLIC COMMAND! The church, individually, and corporately, has to stand up, speak forth, and EXPOSE injustice, hatred, murder, immoral behavior, corruption, covetousness, and whatever else is sinful—no matter who does it, where it is done, and when it is done! THE CHURCH NEEDS TO USE ITS VOICE AND ITS CLOUT! Ladies and Gentlemen, it was the church (Christians) who founded the liberties, prosperity, and protections enjoyed in the United States of America. It was the Christian pulpit that lit the fuse to the “bomb” of human freedom that exploded at America’s colonial armed-defense of “unalienable rights” endowed by their Creator to every human being. It wasn’t atheism, humanism, “the enlightenment” or any other man-made philosophy or ideology. BIBLICAL INFLUENCE IN EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY IS NOT BEING TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS TODAY! AND WE COULD LOSE IT ALL IN ONE GENERATION! I recommend that you read the book, They Preached Liberty, by Franklin P. Cole, an anthology of timely quotations from New England ministers of the American Revolution on the subject of Liberty: Its source, nature, obligations, types, and blessings, (undated), pub. by Liberty Press, Indianapolis, IN. You should also read The Light and the Glory, by Peter Marshall, Jr., and David Manuel Jr., 1977, Revell with its sequel, From Sea to Shining Sea, by the same

authors, 1986, Revell (which brings America's godly history from 1787 to the economic "crash" of 1837—including a tribute to Barton W. Stone and the Cane Ridge "awakening"—and the conscientious stirring against slavery). And, please, if you can find a copy, read my book *What the Bible Says About Civil Government*, 1990, College Press—it has, at the end, a resume of the afore mentioned books. It was an evangelistically militant church that conquered the ancient Roman empire, by truth and love. The Bible stands for human life, liberty, justice, and economic free-enterprise. It's not the infidels and unbelievers of the world who have brought liberty and love to this world!! Satan stands only for enslavement, chaos, exploitation, injustice, and perversion—and so do all who are "with him." How many hospitals have ever been built by atheists? Did America's first schools come from unbelievers? Upon what is America's "justice" system founded? Is America's prosperity the result of God-hating Islam, communism or socialism? Does America's "heart" go out to the rest of the world with "foreign aid" (both governmental and individuals) because Madalyn Murray's organization (American Atheism) "loves" humanity? Christians cannot sit and wait for those who love darkness to come to the light—they will not come because they do not want their evil deeds exposed, not even to themselves! (see John 3:18-21—the same Greek word in slightly different form, eglechthe is used). Paul uses the same word in 1 Tim. 5:20 but most versions translate it "rebuke them in the presence of all" instead of "expose." But you get the idea! The Christian changes darkness into light BY exposing it! When that which is sinful is exposed as sinful, the very exposing becomes light! That which is ETERNAL-LIFE THREATENING MUST BE MARKED, POSTED, EXPOSED, WARNED AGAINST! This is NOT just the job of elders and preachers—it is the responsibility of ALL Christians. But how will Christians ever fulfill this command to expose darkness by using light if they do not know what and where The Light is? GOD'S LIGHT IS IN THE BIBLE—NOT IN OUR "INNER" SUBJECTIVITY (see Num. 15:39; Jer. 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-22; Eph. 4:22-24; Eccl. 8:11; 9:3; Heb. 3:12; 2 Pet. 1:14, etc.). GOD'S LIGHT HAS AN OBJECTIVE LOCATION—THE HOLY SCRIPTURES! Too many Christians do not understand they are to be "darkness -exposers"—they think of themselves only as "light-absorbers!"

Christians are to make the most of their time. The Greek phrase in 5:16 is: *exagorazomenoi ton kairon*. It literally means, "buying up the time, or, redeeming the time, or marketing the time." Paul said in 5:15, Christians are to conduct their lives carefully, and the Greek word *akribos*, means, "accurately, precisely, exactly." Christians should NEVER "waste" time. That, of course, doesn't mean Christians can't rest, relax, stop physical exertion for some other kind of activity. What the apostle is saying to the Ephesians, and to us, is that we should accurately and precisely use every minute of life's time feeding our spiritual development one way or another! And even feeding spiritual development will require a certain amount of physical activity as well as physical rest, diversion, and care of the body. To neglect the proper amount of these physical needs will eventuate in spiritual depression and regression. Even in taking care of our "physical" needs, our minds can be tuned to spiritual feeding and development. As we lie down to sleep we can be praying; as we do our jobs we can think about how they are serving and glorifying the Lord; as we eat we can be mentally giving thanks and enjoying our food; as we drive our cars we can pray and mentally recall scripture passages. All these things "redeem the time" and are precise contributions to spiritual maturation. But there is another area where most Christians really

need to concentrate: We do not use spare time carefully, accurately, and profitably. We should have a Bible, or a good Christian book, or some Christian educational material handy at every place we sit down to rest for a few moments where we can fill our minds with truth, goodness, and God's word. **WHEN WE DO NOT, WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE WILL OF THE LORD AS WE SHOULD!** To understand something, you study it—over and over and over and over again. Every auto-mechanic, carpenter, farmer, computer programmer, electrician, cook, or teacher knows this! To build the church, we must understand what the will of the Lord is—and to understand what the will of the Lord is, we must redeem the time!

Suniete is the Greek word translated “understand” and means literally, “bring together.” Metaphorically it means, “understand thoroughly, perceive clearly, gain insight into.” It is a present, active, imperative verb. It is a “command” for Christians to actively perceive clearly, and understand thoroughly what the will of the Lord is. That means Christians should make every effort, redeeming their time, to understand as much of the will of the Lord as is humanly possible. It is a great temptation to every human being, including every Christian, to waste time senselessly. We fret and fret, we get stressed, we get upset, distracted, beside ourselves over little physical matters or incidents that won't mean a thing in eternity! We watch WAY too much television; we talk on the phone too much; we gad around too much; we “play” too much, and the next thing you know, we have run out of time in the waking hours to understand thoroughly what the will of the Lord is! Many people have a general idea what they “believe” the will of the Lord is. They believe it is simply to behave themselves, be good, don't swear, don't chew tobacco or chase the girls. Some even understand that a person ought to go to church, give liberally to good causes, read the Bible at Christmas, be faithful family members and upstanding citizens. **DO PEOPLE HAVE ANY IDEA WHATSOEVER THAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS FOR HUMAN BEINGS TO CRUCIFY THE OLD MAN (PUT HIM TO DEATH) AND PUT ON THE NEW MAN CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST AS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?** Do people understand that self-centeredness and selfishness must be crucified—that they are to see nothing and no one any more from a human point of view but must see everything and understand everything from God's point of view? Do people understand that God's will for them is to take on themselves the nature of a servant to God and mankind? Do they understand that the will of the Lord is that they become “soldiers” in the army of the Lord, doing battle against ungodliness and wickedness everywhere, and that they may have to suffer persecution and deprivation? Do they understand they should “count the cost” before becoming a disciple of Jesus? **I DON'T THINK SO!** Why don't they? **BECAUSE THEY DON'T WORK AT IT!** Even preachers are vulnerable to studying the word of God merely to get a sermon or a devotion. Studying thoroughly, hermeneutically, grammatically, linguistically, etc., is not all there is to “understanding precisely” what the Lord's will is. Precise understanding comes only when what has been thoroughly studied is precisely put to practice in life! Jesus said, “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them!” John 13:17.

The Greek word asotia, is translated “wantonness” or “excess” but it is the negative of sodzo (meaning, “to save”). Thus asotia means, literally, “wasted, lost, useless, not-

saved.” Debauchery is where the Prodigal Son wound up—“wasted, lost, useless” eating with the hogs.” Finally, he “came to himself” and left his debauchery. Drunkenness is not the only form of debauchery! The Greek word applies to any kind of outrageous conduct, any kind of prodigality or profligacy. It applies to a riotous, violent kind of life. It also applies to a totally hedonistic, materialistic kind of life whether one ever gets drunk or riotous, violent or doped up in his hedonism or not! The totally materialistic, physical mind-set will NEVER understand what the will of the Lord is until it “comes to itself” and returns to its “father” in true repentance. The flesh wars against the spirit and is opposed to the Spirit to prevent you from doing what you should. Gal. 5:17. The opposite of debauchery or materialistic-excess is spirituality. It is significant that the Greek text in 5:18 says “...but be filled with spirit.” The definite article is absent before the word pneumatē which indicates it might not be translated “the spirit” but could be translated, “be filled with spirituality.” Of course, the only way to be filled with spirituality is to be filled with the Spirit of God, but the absence of the definite article certainly indicates Paul is not talking about some special, charismatic, first century gift of the Spirit. He is talking about the word of Christ, just as Jesus explained in John 6:63 that assimilating Christ’s nature was by partaking of his word is being “filled with Christ’s spirit.” Being filled with God’s spirit will aid us in understanding what his will is, and we will then build the church of Christ as we should.

To “address one another” means in the Bible what it means in commonsense language—it means talk, discuss, converse in such a way that both parties in the discussion (“one another”) will KNOW they are “talking.” Paul uses the Greek word *lalountes*, in 5:19 (present, active, imperative) and it is translated “addressing” in RSV, but “speaking” in ASV and KJV which is clearer than RSV “addressing.” The Greek *lalountes* is the word used in Acts 2:6, 11, to describe the amazement of the “foreigners” in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when they heard the apostles “speaking” in many different “foreign” languages. So, *lalountes*, is speaking to be understood. Paul is commanding that Christians “speak to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and psalming in the heart unto the Lord.” First, Psalms and hymns that “speak” to one another cannot be accompanied by LOUD, REPETITIOUS accompaniment since “one another” cannot hear the words to understand them. All “one another” can hear with LOUD, REPETITIOUS ACCOMPANIMENT IS, LOUD, REPETITIOUS ACCOMPANIMENT! Second, these psalms and hymns and spiritual songs ARE TO BE USED FOR “PSALMING” with or by the “heart” (*kardia*). W. E. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Word (pp. 206-207) defines *kardia* thus: “...the word (*kardia*) came to stand for man’s entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements...In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life...The Bible describes human depravity as in the ‘heart,’ because sin is a principle which has its seat in the center of man’s inward life, and then ‘defiles’ the whole circuit of his action, Matt. 15:19,20...Scripture...regards the heart, as lying deep within, contains ‘the hidden man,’ 1 Pet. 3:4...The heart, in its moral significance in the O.T. includes the emotions, the reason and the will.” The Greek word *psallontes*, in 5:18 is translated “make melody” in RSV, KJV, and ASV, but is “making music” in NIV. The NIV is closest to what the word “psalm” means, Biblically. “Making melody” is a poor translation because the Psalms were Hebrew “songs” and there was not a lot of “melody” (or “parts”) in Hebrew music which was mostly a monotone, and done primarily to teach the WORDS of the

psalm. Listen to any modern Jewish “cantor” (one who “cants” the Psalms and other Jewish music) and you will hear the Psalms “sung” just as they were 2000-3000 years ago. First century music in the synagogue and the early Christian church CERTAINLY WAS NOT AMPLIFIED ELECTRONICALLY WITH SUCH HIGH DECIBELS THAT IT WAS UNABLE TO BE UNDERSTOOD AND A HAZARD TO HUMAN EARS! Remember Paul’s indoctrination of the Corinthian church, “I will sing (psalm) with the spirit and I will sing (psalm) with the mind.” (2 Cor. 14:15). Christians are not to “throw their minds out-of-gear when they sing. The mind must not be neutral in singing—it must be active lest singing become vain, void, empty, and hypocritical! Christian singing is to TEACH, not to “enjoy oneself.” “Making melody” is not a correct translation....psalming or singing is the proper translation. The word “hymn” appears only 5 times in all the NT (Matt. 26:30 & Mark 14:25 (same incident); Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12 (translated, “praise”). Do you think Jesus and his disciples were “enjoying themselves” when they sang a hymn before departing for Gethsemane? Were Paul and his fellow prisoners “enjoying themselves” in prison singing hymns? And the passage in Colossians 3:16 is even more precise and indisputable about the purpose of Christian congregational singing when it says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts TO GOD!” Lo! and Behold! The Greek verbs translated “dwell” “teaching” and “admonishing” are all present, active, imperative. There’s nothing passive and/or subjective about the purpose of singing to one another in Colossians 3:16, or Ephesians 5:19. Christians are not to sit and be entertained by someone else’s singing! It is active, imperative, TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER! If Christian singing is primarily to teach and admonish one another, then it is not primarily to enjoy! CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE TAUGHT A LOT OF THINGS THAT ARE NOT “ENJOYABLE” IN EITHER A PHYSICAL WAY OR EMOTIONAL WAY (like, we are sinners saved by grace, we need to repent of lots of sins even after becoming Christians; there is a judgment coming, so naught of my silver or gold would I withhold, etc. The Psalms of the OT have many “unenjoyable” lessons in them! Try this on for size—THE DEAF PERSON KNOWS THAT “MELODY” IS SECONDARY TO THE SINGULAR IMPORTANCE OF WORDS IN “PSALMING” (I.E., SINGING). FOR THE DEAF, TONAL “MELODY” IS NON-EXISTENT. TONAL MELODY AND BEAT OR RHYTHM ARE OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE IN CHRISTIAN MUSIC. CERTAINLY, HIGH-DECIBEL AMPLIFICATION IS NOT ESSENTIAL AND IS PROBABLY HARMFUL (NOT ONLY TO THE PHYSICAL EAR, BUT TO THE AGGRAVATION OF THE WORSHIPER’S HEART)!

“ALWAYS AND FOR EVERYTHING GIVING THANKS”—that’s the way the phrase goes in Eph. 5:20. The Greek text says it this way--- eucharistountes pantote huper panton en onomati tou kuriou hemon lesou Christou to theo kai patri. The word eucharistountes, is the origin of the English word, “Eucharist” which is sometimes used exclusively to designate the Lord’s Supper. But eucharisteo and derivatives are used in the NT most to say, “give thanks, be grateful.” In fact it is used to describe the Pharisee who prayed “to himself and was “thankful” that he was not like other men—especially the publican who was also in the temple praying God’s mercy upon himself as a sinner. Does always and for everything mean we should give thanks for evil, temptation, death, suffering? Paul comes very close to that when he says things like he said in (please read these texts) 2 Cor. 1:8-11; and 2 Cor. 12:7-

10; and Phil. 4:10-23. Paul wrote the Thessalonians to “give thanks in all circumstances.” Actually, the Greek words in 1 Thess. 5:18 are en panti so the RSV has supplied the word “circumstances.” But en panti, signifies “in all to the highest degree of all!” Now as we’ve discussed before, the word all in the Bible doesn’t mean only “most, nearly, or lots of”—it means ALL! Like James 1:2 “Count it all joy, my brethren, when you fall into manifold temptations.” Or, Rom. 5:3 “And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness;” or, Matt. 5:11-12 “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.” So, you must settle the issue in your mind—WE ARE TO PRAY, GIVING THANKS, ALWAYS & FOR EVERYTHING!! Now, let the Honorable (Ignoramus) former Governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura, say being a Christian is a “cop out” and “a crutch” for those “weak-minded people” who need one. Let him try to “give thanks always for everything” and see whether it is a “sham” or not!

The meaning of “being subject to one another” is a BIG subject. I did a workshop at the OCC Preaching/Teaching Convention, February 1979 on this text and entitled it, “SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER.” The Greek word hupotassomenoi, is a present-middle-nominative-plural-masculine participle of hupotasso. It was primarily a military term meaning, “to rank under, be subordinate.” It is a compound word, hupo (“under”), and tasso (“to arrange in order”). Kittel’s Dictionary of Theology of the New Testament, says: “Originally it is a hierarchical term which stresses the relation (of inferiors) to superiors.” Kittel goes on to say, the use of the word in the NT suggests “a readiness to renounce one’s own will for the sake of others, i.e., agape (“love”) and to give precedence to others.” The Christian is to give precedence to Christ as superior, but also to give precedence to others as superior to himself. (see Rom. 12:10; 15:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:24,33; Phil. 2:3-4). WOW! Again, we are ordered by Christ and his apostles to do something that is very difficult for the human ego to do! We are to rank ourselves under (a) Christ and God; (b) the word of God; (c) one another; (d) properly constituted civil authorities; (e) our spouses; (f) our parents; (g) our church elders. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL, YET, FOR CHRISTIANS TO LEARN AND PRACTICE ABOUT SUBJECTION AND SURRENDER. The Christian who cannot subordinate himself/herself to those whom Christ has named in the Scriptures, CANNOT BE SANCTIFIED, AND CANNOT BE “A LIGHT UNTO THE WORLD.” The idea of “counting others better than self” is totally (180 degrees away from) foreign to and opposed to the world’s mind-set. Such a statement is absolutely shocking to the modern, carnal, psyche! Everything we hear now-a-days, is, “I deserve it; it’s for me; I need my self-esteem; above everything I must ‘feel good’ about myself, I come first.” Those who are not born again swear absolutely that a philosophy of subordination, others first, count others better than self, “will not work in today’s world—or any other world, for that matter.” WELL, THE BIBLE HAS NEVER PROMISED THAT GOD’S WAY NECESSARILY “WORKS” ACCORDING TO THE FLESHLY STANDARDS OF “WHAT WORKS!” GOD’S PROMISES MAY NEVER “WORK” UNTIL WE REACH HEAVEN! THAT’S WHY JESUS ALWAYS PREACHED “COUNT THE COST OF BECOMING MY DISCIPLE.” Now here’s an interesting conclusion to this subject---the motive for the Christian’s subjection of himself to others is the FEAR of Christ. Yes! That’s right! The Greek text uses the word phobo, from which we get the English word, phobia. Everyone

knows what a phobia is! The same Greek word, *phobetai*, is used in Eph. 5:33 to say the wife is to fear her husband. Of course, the Bible would never order a woman to cringe and tremble in dread and paralyzing terror toward her husband—NEVER! But the word does mean respect for superiors in the hierarchical arrangements ordained by God! (see 1 Cor. 11:3-16).

Once again, Paul uses the Greek word *mysterion*, as he did in Eph. 1:9; 3:3; and 3:9. It is appropo for Paul to use the word to Ephesus because that city was one of the centers of Greek cult-worship (“mystery-religions”). Remember! There were “a number” of people in Ephesus who “practiced magic arts” who, upon conversion to Christ, brought their “magic books” and burned them in the sight of all—50,000 pieces of silver worth probably \$3 million in USA currency today (Acts 19:11-20). But in Eph. 5:21-33 Paul speaks of the “mysterious” (*mysterion*) “connection” between human marriage and Christ’s relationship to the church. It should have been no complete mystery as to the relationship of God to his elect BECAUSE in the OT prophets human marriage is used allegorically (and even literally) in describing this relationship. Hosea was commanded by God to literally marry a woman with a “spirit of harlotry” who later ran off with paramours and when they deserted her. God told Hosea to marry her again. So Hosea used his literal experience to “lay it on the line” to Israel about her “adulterous” relationship to “other husbands” (i.e., idols). Isaiah 62:1-5 predicts the Messianic age will be when God will “marry” a remnant of Israel again after she had “forsaken” him—Israel will be called “Beulah-Land” which means “Married-Land.” This is all Messianic. Ezekiel 16:1-63 uses an allegory of God’s “marriage” to Israel when she was a beautiful young maiden—later she prostituted herself to other “lovers” (i.e., idols)—but God would “restore her fortunes” in the Messianic age with an “everlasting covenant.” See also Isa. 50:1-2; John 3:29-30; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:6-10. The relationship between human marriage and Christ and his church is no longer a “mystery”! CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A RELIGION—IT’S A “MARRIAGE.” It has been revealed that God actually came down to earth and UNITED himself to believing, penitent, people in a UNION more loving, more binding, more faithful, more joyous than human marriage could ever be! And that is saying a lot for a man and woman here on earth who have loved and married and been faithful for 65 (11/20/13) years as I and my wife are. We wonder how any future experience could be more joyous than all those years of loving, caring, growing married life! C. S. Lewis said one might explain to a five year old that the rapture of married sexual intercourse is the highest human (physical) ecstasy that can be experienced in the following manner. If you ask the youngster the most delightful experience he’s ever had, he would probably say eating all the chocolate candy or ice cream he wanted or buying all the toys he wanted. Lewis would then tell the 5-year-old that the married sexual experience was “a hundred times” better than chocolates or ice-cream, or toys. Our marriage to Christ, when it is finally consummated at the Second Coming will be “millions of times” better than human marriage. Christ loved the church with agape love—God’s love. That’s loving someone when one doesn’t deserve it, doesn’t want it, mock it, and kill you because of it. Christ sacrificed himself on behalf of the church. He gave up any rights he had (even equality with God) to “marry” the church. THAT IS WHAT HUSBANDS ARE TO DO ON BEHALF OF THEIR WIVES HERE ON EARTH. AND THE SAME SELF-SACRIFICE (SUBJECTION) IS EXPECTED OF THE WIFE FOR HER HUSBAND! Self-centeredness is not even to be named in Christian marriage! Selfishness in

sexual intimacy is forbidden; selfishness in family finances is forbidden; selfishness in work around the house is forbidden; selfishness in visiting relatives is forbidden; selfishness in relationships to the children is forbidden; selfishness in time alone is forbidden.

SELFISHNESS IN MARRIAGE IS AN ESPECIALLY EGREGIOUS SIN! Jesus said when men and women get married **THEY BECOME ONE!** This same renunciation of self is clearly to be applied to our marriage to Christ. We, as the church, are his bride—he is our husband. **SELFISHNESS IN OUR RELATION TO CHRIST IS FORBIDDEN.** Just as in human marriage all other attachments become secondary. When we “marry” Christ we put all other ties secondary to Christ our husband (self, human wife, human parents, human children, property, career, power, fame). When Paul said “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one.” 5:31, he used the Greek word *proskollethesetai*, translated, “cleaves, or, is joined” and literally means, “glued, or cemented together—intensively.” **WE ARE “GLUED, CEMENTED” TO CHRIST!** Everything else becomes peripheral to the very core of our being, the source of our existence, our first love, our adored one, our joy, our “can’t-do-without-person,” our life, our Savior and our God! **WE’RE MARRIED TO CHRIST—WE DON’T JUST GO TO CHURCH—WE DON’T JUST WORSHIP—WE DON’T JUST PRAY—WE DON’T JUST GIVE A LITTLE HERE AND THERE—WE DON’T JUST READ ABOUT HIM OCCASIONALLY...CHRIST IS OUR “ONE AND ONLY TRUE LOVE.”** THAT’S THE “MEGA-MYSTERY.” **WE MADE A COVENANT OF MARRIAGE TO JESUS CHRIST WHEN WE BECAME A CHRISTIAN.** Christian, to dispel the darkness, and build the church, let the world see everyday that you are married to Jesus Christ!! **HAVE YOU EVALUATED YOUR “MARRIAGE” TO JESUS LATELY?** Marriage is a unity of mind, body, heart, possessions, goals, and ambitions. It is sacred—that means it is “sanctified.” It is two people who have become “one” and set apart from all other persons—even from parents, children and other relations. That is how we are to consider ourselves in relationship to Jesus Christ. That is why Christ said if we choose to follow him, we must love him more than father, mother, brother, and sister. Marriage in this life is serious. But marriage to Christ is the ultimate seriousness. There’s no room in our marriage to Christ for frivolity, trivialities, or unfaithfulness.

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler

EPHESIANS 6:1-24

The pivotal statement of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6, is, "...and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore..." (6:13-14). Everything else in his conclusion to this letter (epistle) pivots around that statement, or, one word, "STAND." The Greek verb in v. 13 *stenai*, is infinitive, aorist tense, active voice (it is a verb of action, acting the part of a noun). It means "stand up to, resist, don't lie down and surrender"--- but *stete*, in v. 14, is the imperative verb, aorist tense, active voice from of the same word, and is a command "to stand up to, resist, don't lie down and allow yourself to be overwhelmed." "STAND!" is the OBJECT for which ALL the earlier matters of the epistle are enumerated— ch. 1, the grace of God; ch. 2, the reconciled new man (God's workmanship); ch. 3, the "no-longer-a-mystery" Gospel, i.e., the manifold wisdom of God (salvation) made known to all people; ch. 4, the gifts of ministry; and ch. 5 the marriage of believers to Christ. Since we have our objective, let us STAND. Augustine (A.D. 354-420), bishop at Hippo, North Africa, most responsible for the direction Christianity took during the Middle Ages, once wrote: "It is not only important what a man does, but what object he has in view in doing it. Let the captain of a vessel understand perfectly how to manage it, but if he does not know the direction of the port he is sailing to, of what use is it that he can sail hither and thither as he pleases? He knows how to protect the vessel from the fury of the waves, to turn and to back about just as he may think best; but if asked, whither are you sailing? he answers, I do not know; or, instead of saying that, he says, I am sailing to yonder port, and then runs not into the port, but against the rocks...So it is with the man who, if he runs ever so well, has lost the right path. Would it not be better if the captain were not so vigorous, if he steered the vessel with labor and some difficulty, and yet pursued the right track; and would it not be better for the traveler if he were weaker and slower, but yet in the right way, rather than be running in the wrong direction?" (From 450 True Stories from Church History, by J. Vernon Jacobs, pub. Eerdmans). That is a 1600-year-old critique of much of 21st century religion which preaches a philosophy of—"it makes no difference the object of our enthusiastic actions, it's the enthusiasm that counts." That's not what Ephesians chapter 6 says! THIS CONCEPT OF THE PRIMACY OF OBJECT WILL COME UP AT THE VERY END OF THIS CHAPTER!

The devil's FIRST attack upon any individual is in earliest childhood (indirectly through Biblically-illiterate, unregenerated persons—whether parents or others) when the devil convinces a child he/she should not obey his/her parents. That was the devil's attack upon the first completely innocent "children" ever "born"—ADAM & EVE. "Do not obey your heavenly Father!" I would suppose that Cain, somehow, found out about his "role-model's" disobedience and decided he would try to get away with what they hadn't! That seems to be the "bent" of human volitional and thinking processes ever since—rebellion against God and all other sanctioned authority (Rom. 1 & 2). Rebellion of a child against parents is so diametrically opposed to the nature of the kingdom (rule) of God, God made it a sin punishable by death in the OT! Childhood rebellion uncontrolled is equally as serious an

assault upon social order as adult crime—that’s why God legislated the death penalty for it! God did not create this cosmos a “chaos” (Isa. 45:18-19). He is the Creator and God of order (1 Cor. 14:1-40). Children who rebel against their parents begin to belong to the devil—not to God! Hopefully, such children will LEARN obedience. Obedience has to be TAUGHT & LEARNED! It is neither innate nor accidental. It is God’s command that children obey (hupakouete, present-active-imperative) their parents. The word hupakouete is a compound word making it emphatic, literally, “fasten your ears upon what your parents say, and do it.” There are many Biblical examples of disobedient children. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had disobedient children, Eli, the priest of God, had very disobedient sons; Samuel, prophet and priest of God had disobedient sons, David had rebellious sons, the story of the Prodigal told by Jesus indicts us ALL as disobedient children of God.

John N. Clayton, High School science teacher and Church of Christ lecturer, in South Bend, IN, publishes a bi-monthly magazine entitled, Does God Exist? designed to “convince mankind that God is real and the Bible is His word,” relates in the May/June 1999 issue: “I once had a teenager in class whose behavior was highly destructive, even though she was supposed to be a Christian, and in fact, was very active in church activities. I tried to talk to her about her inconsistency of living destructively and yet being active in church programs. Her response to me was, ‘Well, I only go to church to get my folks off my back. It’s a small price to pay for peace at home.’” Parents are responsible before God to see that their children obey—especially, the father. And how is a “father/parent” to get this done? (A) by nurturing—the Greek word is ektrephete, and means “feed;” this word is used in James 5:5 for “fattening” someone; (B) by discipline—Greek paideia, means “to train through action, as Greek tutors (and much later, even early American school teachers) often did when they applied the rod to “train” their students when severity was called for; (C) by admonition—Greek nouthesia, “to place, or deposit, or set in the mind.” So the responsibility of parents, esp. fathers, is to “feed until fat” the food of the Lord to their children (his Word, Jn. 6:35-63) by active training (i.e., the “rod” when necessary) so as to deposit and set that training in the minds of their children, all without “provoking a child to wrath.” This apostolic imperative brings the OT admonitions of Solomon up to the level of Christ and the NT! Does “active training” (with the “rod” when necessary) provoke a child to wrath? Is it whipping an intransigent, obdurate child that provokes wrath in him? Yes! said Dr. Spock—No! says God! In fact, the opposite is the case. To allow an incorrigible, unmanageable child to go uncorrected (even if it takes force) IS what provokes the child to wrath (Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-18; 19:15; Heb. 12:7-11). The same is true of ADULTS in situations where obedience is primary (i.e., the military, the church, the work-place, the society as a whole). Few children will ever understand that precept until they are older and have children of their own, get a job, or join the Marines. Too many children have grown up to be parents (even adults without children) and still do not understand the principle! The Bible says a child who is not chastened feels like an unwanted, illegitimate child! (Heb. 12:8). Sometimes it takes a “rod” (my Dad always used his razor strap—Mom used the fly-swatter or a yard-stick, or made us go cut a “switch” from a tree in the yard). **MAY THE CHURCH GIVE OUR CHRISTIAN PARENTS AN ACUTE AWARENESS OF THE TREMENDOUS RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTHOOD!!** Fathers and mothers cannot “feed” their children if they are so involved in other spiritual matters they are never present for any “feeding times.” Parents, when you’re

home (and you'd better be there often) take time to "feed and fatten" those whom God has placed in your stewardship on God's word. You can be sure the devil is always around to "feed" them through actions and instruction----he's after their minds! Paul did not write, "...just take them to Bible School and that's all the feeding they'll need..." THANK GOD FOR THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE SCHOOL----BUT WAKE UP HOME! The girl to whom high school teacher John Clayton spoke evidently got very little real nurturing (feeding) at home. For her, obedience was a facade to hide her rebellion.

The word "honor" in the Exodus 20:12 passage is *kavod* and includes the idea of "weight, worth, wealth, abundance." The same is true of the word in Matthew 15:4; 19:19; Eph. 6:2; 1 Tim. 5:17, etc. which is Greek *tima*. What both the OT commandment in the Decalogue and the commandment of Christ and the apostles mean by "honor" includes financial support (when needed) along with physical, mental, and emotional respect. I will use my own beloved father, who has gone to be with my mother and Jesus, who signed a "promissory note" for his own father during the "great depression" of the 1930's so his father and mother could keep their home. When my Dad's father could not meet the "note" on time, my Dad respectfully let the bank take his new 1929 Chevy to redeem the note. My Dad rode the streetcar to work and home quite a few years before he could buy another car (and of course my mother and my sister and I had to ride the streetcar to church, walk to school in all kinds of weather, etc.) in order for my Dad to "honor" his father and mother in their distress and need. This kind of "honor" is certainly included in Ephesians 6:2. Yung people if you want the devil to get you, just neglect helping your parents when they need help! THAT IS A WORK CHILDREN ARE TO DO AS THEIR SHARE OF THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH (see Eph. 4:16). Dwight L. Moody once wrote, "I am tired of the word duty; tired of hearing duty, duty, duty. Men go to church because it is their duty. You can never reach a man's heart if you talk to him because it is your duty. Suppose I told my wife I love her because it is my duty—what would she say? Once every year I go up to Connecticut to visit my aged mother. Suppose when I go next time, I tell her I know she is old and living on borrowed time; that I knew she had done a great deal for me, and that I came to see her every year because it is my duty. Don't you think she would say, 'Well, then, my son, you needn't take the trouble to come again?' Oh, let us strike for a higher plane than duty." HONOR IS A HIGHER PLANE THAN DUTY! It not only means to support one's parents when they are in financial need, it means taking them into your own home when they need tender loving care in their old age. WE HAVE CERTAINLY VEERED AWAY FROM THAT KIND OF "HONORING OF PARENTS" IN THIS AGE OF "REST HOMES." I must tell you about my Grandfather "Lon" Thurman (my mother's Dad) who took into his home two of his aged aunts, both of whom were spinsters, deaf and mute, one was crippled and the other was blind. He and my grandmother and their children (5 at home at this time) lived in a four room farm house in Dallas Co., MO, farming 200 acres in the 1920's and 30's, and taking care of these two aged aunts who could hardly dress themselves! This they did until his aunts died, and my grandfather, who never had a bank account in his life (only a few dollars in his pocketbook) bought lots in the town cemetery to bury them. They were sisters of his mother, still alive and well, who should have been at least sharing in their keep but she didn't. NOW THAT'S HONORING YOUR PARENTS EVEN WHEN THEY DON'T SEEM TO DESERVE IT!

“Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters.” That was not addressed originally to free, American, employed, union-members. That was to people who were considered to have NO RIGHTS—who were treated as CHATTEL (i.e. “property”). They were, normally, paid no wages, given no benefits, no hope of retirement, owned no property, often separated from spouses and children. Their master (owner) had the power of life and death over them and could have them flogged, sold, or slain (or thrown to the beasts in the arena) without any legal proceedings. And, as Christians, slaves they were to be obedient “with fear and trembling in singleness of heart.” “Singleness of heart” means “with an undistracted mind.” Do you think you would be “distracted” if you had been a slave in the Roman Empire of the 1st century? Would you have ever thought of anything other than your work and your master’s benefit? Slaves who were Christians were expected to concentrate and do the best job they were capable of doing for their master’s benefit (Gr. kurios, “Lord”) see Col. 3:22-25. Normally, one would expect slaves, even Christian slaves, to be a “tad” resentful of their circumstances. Some would be filled with malice and a desire for vengeance. One would expect a slave to seek every way possible (short of getting caught) to shirk on the job, be unfaithful, even destructive toward his “master.” AT LEAST A SLAVE WOULD BE EXPECTED TO RUN AWAY, TO PERHAPS KILL HIS MASTER, IN ORDER TO GAIN HIS FREEDOM! But, NO! Paul does not even grant a Christian slave that reaction to injustice (see Philemon and 1 Cor. 7:20-24). Christian slaves who would act with malice, resentment, violence, thievery, even with untrustworthiness or unfaithfulness would be capitulating to being defeated by the devil! HOWEVER, if a Christian slave does right and suffers for it, and takes it patiently, he has God’s approval, because that is what he (and all Christian workers, union or non-union) has been called to as a Christian (read 1 Pet. 2:18-25; 4:12-19). Now if Paul expected that of Christian slaves, what does he expect of Christian workers in modern America? Of course, we can’t expect such a regenerated, born-again attitude or behavior from non-Christian workers. Does this Biblical standard for a Christian slave make you grateful that you live in a land where “God shed his grace on thee”? Does it make you ashamed and penitent about murmuring over YOUR job circumstances? Are you going to change? IF A CHRISTIAN WORKER IS GOING TO DEFEAT THE DEVIL “ON THE JOB” HE/SHE WILL HAVE TO CONFORM TO THE LORD’S WILL HERE IN EPHESIANS 6:5-8 AND PARALLELS.

what the profit margin! And it has been done, over and over, in communities both ancient and modern where Biblical ethics in business have been used. God has never promised that following HIS ETHICS in business would make every one practicing them rich or wealthy. The Bible does advocate a laissez-faire, “free enterprise” economic system for his temporary society on earth (the OT bears this out, as well as the NT) (see What The Bible Says About Civil Government, chapter 8, pp. 301-338, by Paul T. Butler, 1990, College Press, Joplin, MO.). Is the devil at work in the secular market-place to recruit rebels against God? Isn't the secular business world a sort of neutral zone? Doesn't the devil work on us only in our private lives? Should we even take our religion with us into the market-place, into the halls of government, into the public educational institutions? IF CHRISTIANS CAN'T DEFEAT THE DEVIL ON THE JOB, THEY CANNOT EXPECT TO BUILD THE CHURCH. The “market-place” will not be impressed by the Gospel until they see it working on “their turf.” We must not abandon society to the devil. The whole world is God's world. The devil is only the PRETENDED “god of this world”—and he's the pretender. God hasn't turned the world over “lock-stock-and-barrel” to the devil. Christ wants us to “take possession” of the world (through aggressive evangelistic persuasion)—extending God's kingdom into all realms and arenas. The “sword of the Spirit” must strike in the secular world EVERYWHERE and strike, and strike, and strike, until it is won for God!

Our “warfare” is “spiritual,” not carnal (not of the flesh, not material) (see in connection with this question, 2 Cor. 10:3-5). The apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians that the Christian warfare is with arguments—Greek, ochuromaton, lit. “fortifications, strongholds” but used figuratively in the NT for strong philosophical, ideological “arguments” against God); every “proud obstacle” (Greek hupsoma epairomenon) i.e., “every haughty voice raised against” the knowledge of God (i.e., the Bible); and we are to “take every thought captive...” (Greek, aichmalotizontes pan noema) i.e., “take prisoner, get control over, every thought” (Greek, eis ten hupakoēn tou Christou), i.e., “unto the obedience of the Christ.” Paul makes this plain in our Ephesians 6:10ff passage as well as in numerous other NT passages. OUR BATTLE IS WITH THE MIND, WITH THE THINKING, WITH THE REASONING, CHOOSING, WILLING POWERS OF HUMAN BEINGS— WE ARE NOT TO BATTLE THE WORLD ON THE FIELD OF FLESH—WE DON'T BOMB, SHOOT, INCARCERATE, TORTURE, STARVE, FEED, PAMPER, GRATIFY, INDULGE, APPEASE, CATER TO, OR COMMISERATE WITH HUMAN FLESHLY BATTLES! (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:13-30; 13:14; 1 Cor. 9:27; 5:16—we could list 20 or 30 passages that apply to this concept). After all, it is the MIND SUBMITTED TO THE WORD OF GOD that controls the flesh! (see Matt. 4:1-11; Rom. 8:5-17; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Gal. 5:16-26; Col. 2:20—3:17; 1 Pet. 2:11-12—we could go on and on with references to this, too!). The church will not be built on “body count” but on “mind count.” Just having warm bodies filling pews does not necessarily mean we are defeating the devil. You probably know of some very large “religious gatherings” where God and his word are not present, but is ridiculed, rejected and despised. Right here in our own congregation, bodies could be present but the minds in rebellion. While that will not usually be the case, we do need to beware of the seduction of “body counting.” i.e., “Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). The devil's goal in this great struggle is to “blind the minds” of men and women to the Gospel. His primary focus is not on the body but on the mind (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

(although he may try to hurt the body to divert the mind, e.g., Job 1 & 2). Jesus said the devil “has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him...when he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” Jn. 8:44. The activity of Satan is with “pretended (pseudo) signs and wonders and all wicked deception to get people to believe what is false...” 2 Thess. 2:10-12. **AND HE DOES THIS THROUGH HUMAN ASSISTANTS!** The only way to know whether some religious teaching, philosophy, feeling, action, circumstance, ideology, etc., is from the devil or from God is to compare these matters with what the word of God says (1 Jn. 4:1-6).

The “powers” against which Christian’s struggle are “spiritual.” This does not necessarily mean we will have “demons” running wild all over the world, inhabiting anyone who is not a Christian. Demons didn’t “run wild” all over the ancient world in the time of Christ! **NOT EVERY UNBELIEVER JESUS MET AND TALKED WITH AND “FAILED” TO CONVERT, WAS POSSESSED OF A DEMON!**

But many people Jesus met had “sold their souls and minds” to the devil’s falsehoods delivered to them by other unbelieving human beings who were being used by the devil as hell’s “messengers”—INCLUDING, AT CERTAIN TIMES, HIS OWN DISCIPLES—JUDAS (see John 13:27), PETER (see Matt. 16:23), AND ALL THE OTHER DISCIPLES AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER (Matt. 20:17-28; Luke 9:37-43; 10:17-20; Mark 8:13-21, etc.). IT DOES MEAN, HOWEVER, that our warfare is against (A) “principalities” archas (i.e., those “beginning” powers of darkness, the devil and his angels); (B) “powers” exousias, (the realm which the Sovereign God has relegated to Satan—falsehood Jn. 8:44; Acts 26:18; temptation Matt. 4:3; 2 Cor. r:4; 11:3; not death, but fear of death, Heb. 2:15; Rom. 8:15, etc.) (C) “against the world rulers of this present darkness, Greek, kosmokratoras tou skotous touto; clearly from a Biblical standpoint this refers to secular rulers of nations and peoples who rule from the darkness of the devil (falsehood, unbelief)—Daniel symbolized the direct connection heathen rulers have with hell when they reject God in Dan. 10-11-12—Revelation does the same with the “beastly” emperors of the 1st through the 5th century Roman empire, and finally, (D) “against the spiritual ones (neuter adj. pronoun) of evil in the heavenly places, Greek phrase, ta pneumatika tes ponerias en tois epouraniois, and, we’ve already learned that “heavenly places” could mean the old Judaic system abrogated by God with the Gospel, or even the church. There is nothing in this text that forces us to understand we are involved in a constant, overwhelming battle against any supernatural powers of Satan (he only has certain supernatural powers when God specifically grants them, e.g., Job 1 & 2; see also Lk. 22:31-34). If we had to face a “miraculous power of evil constantly,” God would surely endow each Christian with a higher supernatural power to defeat the devil. **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS “SUPERNATURAL DUALISM” TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE, i.e., THAT GOD AND THE DEVIL HAVE EQUAL SUPERNATURAL POWERS—AND THE WORLD IS STILL WAITING TO SEE WHO’S GOING TO WIN! JEHOVAH GOD AND JESUS CHRIST HIS SON ARE ALMIGHTY! THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN HISTORY THAT THEY ARE SOVEREIGN OVER THE DEVIL! THAT PRECLUDES ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE DEVIL CAN DO EVIL MIRACLES ANYTIME AND ANYWHERE HE WISHES!** You will notice, please, that none of the Christian armor has to do with alleged special, charismatic, modern-

day, miraculous “gifts of the Spirit.” The human being, Christian or not, does not have WITHIN HIMSELF, sufficient defense or power to withstand the devil’s deception and subtlety. God has supplied every believer with a defense powerful enough to resist (see again 2 Cor. 10:3-5). Paul promised the Corinthians, every one of them—not just those with special “gifts” they had the power to “cast down and take captive” EVERYTHING that exalts itself against God. Wilbur Fields wrote, “Our battle with Satan is raging within us, and yet we are scarcely aware of it. The silence of the conflict is one of the perils of it. We are contestants, not spectators who can slumber as we contemplate the struggle.” (see Rom. 7:21-25; Gal. 5:17-18). Our divine weapons are: (a) truth—i.e., the Bible; (b) righteousness—imputed and accomplished; (c) the gospel or good news of peace with God; (d) the faith, i.e., not just “faith,” but all the facts, warnings, commands, and promises of NT doctrine, (e) salvation; (f) the word of God, and (g) ceaseless prayer. PLEASE NOTE: with this armor and these weapons we are promised we can “QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE DEVIL.” Not just “some,” but ALL! We don’t need miracles today to fight against the devil!!!

“The sword of the Spirit, WHICH IS the word of God...” is none other than the Bible! It is the Bible only! Because that is the only place God has revealed his word until the end of time! It is the “faith once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). A “sword” in first century idiom was not just a weapon for defending oneself—it was a weapon to use to go on the offense, to charge the enemy, to conquer. It is the only weapon by which we may “may destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit...and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart...” (Heb. 4:12). Through the word of God everyone is brought face to face with God, and no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:13). No psychiatrist, psychologist, preacher, father, mother, sister or brother knows you like God’s word knows you! If you want to know yourself better than any “shrink” could ever tell you, read God’s word and apply it directly to yourself! If you’re a Christian, Christ is supposed to have “conquered” you with the “sword of the Spirit—God’s word.” If you have trouble thinking of yourself as conquered and controlled by Christ’s word, then you should have trouble calling yourself a Christian! Not only must your mind be surrendered to the Bible, but your values, your choices, your actions, and your feelings are under the power of God’s (S)WORD, if you wish to belong to his kingdom. Harold W. Ford wrote, when he was Academic Dean of Pacific Christian College, “The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ remains, yet, the single most important task to which a Christian human being can commit himself and his talents...when you begin to think about priorities, preaching is the highest on the list....It must be characterized by intelligent Christian truth and scriptural soundness...because our world is now embroiled in a war of ideas, the idea that it is only through Jesus Christ that the world can be reconciled to God must ring through the din of battle with enthusiasm and clarity. This calls for preaching.” Unless Christians are “rigged” (armored) and “armed” (with God’s word in their memories and hearts); and unless Christians actually do battle with the “spiritual hosts of wickedness” in both high and low places, the church cannot be built. Take heed to Paul’s promise to Timothy (in the “beastly” Roman Empire of the 1st century)—“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, , and for training in righteousness, that

the man of God may be complete, equipped for every (AND “EVERY” MEANS “EVERY”) good work.” 2 Tim. 3:16-17. I have deliberately emphasized a few words to show that we need nothing more than God’s living, and active word, to defeat the devil!

Paul asked the Ephesians to “keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...that utterance may be given...boldly to proclaim the ...gospel.” Indeed, it is a fact—the devil often gets right in the middle of the saints, in the church! (read Revelation 2:1—3:22, esp. 2:19-29; and Acts 20:28-32). Every one of Paul’s epistles (Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, etc.) trumpeted warnings about what Satan was attempting to do in their midst through certain factious, immoral, legalistic people! The Greek word *proskarteresei* is translated perseverance, and literally means, “give attention to; give unremitting care to” (see Rom. 16:6 where it is translated, “attending to.”). In other words, perseverance is not just passive—it is active! “Keep alert” is the Greek verb *agrupnountes*, meaning, “sleeplessness.” Paul carried out his ministry to the Ephesians not shrinking from declaring the whole counsel of God, publicly, from house to house, night and day, with tears (please read Acts 20:17-35). Should Christians ever lose sleep in order to “build the church?” You answer that! Only when the text of the Bible is proclaimed is the church kept alert with all perseverance— anything less is not in harmony with the NT....ANYTHING LESS IS SURRENDERING TO THE DEVIL! TO THAT END—Paul wanted the Ephesians to know how he was! Saints EVERYWHERE need to hear news of how the work is going with each soldier or group of soldiers! Paul sent Tychicus to the Ephesian brethren FOR THAT VERY PURPOSE! Christians need to be candid with one another about the work of the gospel....we need to be realistic and truthful, even about how we are personally doing and feeling in our labors for the Lord! It is of very little value to the encouragement of gospel work to hide reality under a cloak of superficial positiveness when “everything” (Eph. 6:21) needs to be told! Paul was in prison when he wrote Ephesians. When Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus from his imprisonment he did not “hide” his feelings or his concerns or his admonitions! Tychicus did not try to hide circumstances (probably Paul’s feelings) about the imprisonment and the needs Paul might have had...or the need for serious prayer. I’m very interested in the specific Christian works my wife and I support financially. We want to know about their personal lives (what is appropriate); about how they are doing family-wise, etc; to know about their work (not at all to criticize, but just to be encouraged to learn all we can learn about it); to know personally, as fellow-laborers in the faith, so to speak, every missionary we’re sending support to, and let them know we care about them very much. We need to write to our missionaries, and preachers, and teachers and tell them how we are doing, and what we are doing and they’re interested in our work, too! We are all in this together. Christians need to encourage one another in order to defeat the devil. Military servicemen know how helpful it is to receive letters of encouragement from home while thousands of miles away fighting a war. It was often the only thing that sustained ME during my months and years at sea in the U.S. Navy, especially in the Korean War—a letter from home was worth more than anything money could buy!

Paul was a promoter of peace among Christian brethren. A Jew would think of “peace” in his own language, even though he was writing in Greek and used the word *Eirene*

(Greek was the lingua franca—the ancient world’s language of commerce and diplomacy). The Hebrew word for “peace” is shalom, and means more than simply a cessation of hostilities (although it includes that). Shalom means, “wholeness, integrity, well-being, even sometimes, prosperity.” So he closes his letter to the Ephesian church with eirene, i.e., Shalom! He had been willing to spend and be spent under “daily pressure in anxiety for all the churches” (2 Cor. 11:28) and undoubtedly wanted to hear a return message from Tychicus that there was wholeness, well-being and prosperity in the faith among the brethren at Ephesus where he “went from house to house, night and day, in tears” for 3 years “commending the Christians to the word of God which was able to build them up and given them an inheritance among the saints.” (cf. Acts 20). He suffered slander, misunderstanding, and even physical harm to himself in order to promote peace. He gave up many of his “liberties” and “rights” as a Christian and an apostle, just to maintain peace among the brethren. When he was reviled, he did not revile back; when he was threatened, he did not threaten; when slighted or misunderstood, he was longsuffering and patient—all that from an ex-hot-headed, bigoted, self-righteous Pharisee and Jewish rabbi who was born again unto salvation in Christ Jesus! Paul was a promoter of grace! The Greek word charis, is translated “grace.” Charis is the word from which we get the English word, charisma. Charis may be related to the Greek word cheiragogos, which is translated “hand.” To extend the “hand” in friendship or to “lay hands upon” usually meant a demonstration of “graciousness.” Paul preached grace; he practiced grace. He deplored both legalism and unbridled libertinism. He knew that the devil operates in both legalistic asceticism and in libertine indulgence. He advocated self-disciplined stability and moderation in both mind, emotions and body! But most of all Paul was a promoter of “undying love” for Christ and his word. As far as Paul was concerned, undying love was the cure for all Christians ills—individually and collectively. He considered love and personal conviction of the resurrection of Christ as cures for all the ills of the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. 13:4-13; 15:1-58). Undying love for Christ because of Christ’s love for Paul is what constrained Paul, gave him a regenerated perspective, and made him a willing ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:11-21). In the final analysis, it is undying love for Christ that will ultimately save us. We cannot be meritoriously sinless on our own; we cannot atone for our own sins; BUT WE CAN HAVE UNDYING LOVE, FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND EXPECT TO RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE.!

It is very interesting that Paul, writing in 63 A.D., about 10 years after he had started the church at Ephesus, should encourage them to an undying love. For it was the risen, glorified, enthroned Jesus Christ, 30 years after Paul wrote, who sent a letter from heaven by the pen of the apostle John (Rev. 2:1-7) WHO WARNED THE EPHESIAN CHURCH THAT IT HAD “ABANDONED THE LOVE IT HAD AT FIRST!” It is possible for love to die! It is possible for men’s love for God and people to grow cold! (Matt. 24:12). Human beings will always LOVE—but the question is, WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF THEIR LOVE? “...men will be lovers of self, lovers of money....lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. AVOID SUCH PEOPLE.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

Introduction to the Sound Bible Study project.

The Sound Bible Study project is a cooperative effort of Christian educators and Jordan Media Enterprises LLC to provide the serious examination of the Scriptures for the conscientious student. All the teachers are experienced educators who have spent countless hours in the classroom on both sides of the lectern. The audio recordings and written notes are made available for those who wish to learn God's Word at a collegiate level but have been unable to matriculate. There is no intention to compete with the many faithful Bible schools, but rather to serve along side and strengthen both the student and the teacher for a stronger and more effective Kingdom of God that knows how to properly divide the Word of God.

