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TAPE LIST

- IA11-360 Christmas Special, part 4: When darkness surrounds, God's promises keep us hoping.
12-28-03 Gen 15:12; Mal 3:7-8,13,16, 4:2-6; Luk 1:18-19, 57-80
- IA11-361 Degeneracy and historical disaster in a nation.
12-31-03 Rev 12:13; Dan 12:4; Isa 40:31; Lam 3:21-28; 2Co 11:13-15; 2Ti 3:1-4; Deu 4:19-27, 28:63-68
- IA11-362 The main reason for a Jewish holocaust, or persecution of the Jews in a violent expression.
01-01-04 Isa 3:1-11; Deu 4:19-27; 28:63-68
- IA11-363 Why did the nation of Israel and the Jews suffer so much?
01-02-04 Mat 15:11-16; 23:16-19; Jos 2:10-11; Exo 7:22, 8:15, 32, 9:34-35.
- IA11-364 God used the hardness of Pharaoh's heart to evangelize the world.
01-04-04 Rom 9:17-18, Jos 2:10-11, Rom 11:7-36, Psa 76:10, 2Co 13:8, Phi 2:10-11
- IA11-365 Holocaust judgment dramatizes the fact that mankind is simply the product of his own volition.
01-07-04 Rev 17:1-17; Gal 6:7-10; Pro 2:10-17, 6:16-19
- IA11-366 God uses evil to destroy evil, arrogance to destroy arrogance, and degeneracy to destroy degeneracy.
01-08-04 Heb 3:7-13, 4:7; Rev 17:17; Gal 6:7-10; Pro 2:10-17, 6:16-19, 23:29-35; Joh 15:17-25; Eph 6:1-4
- IA11-367 Inevitably, Jesus Christ controls history, and He often uses the volition of evil people and evil nations to do so.
01-09-04 Col 1:16-17, Heb 1:3, Joh 15:17-25, Joh 1:11, Eph Eph 6:1-4, Rev 17:16-17
- IA11-368 Divine protection for regenerate Israel in the first half of the Tribulation.
01-11-04 Rev 12:13-14; Isa 33:5-6; Exo 19:4; Deu 32:9-12; Dan 9:27, 11:31, 12:11; Psa 144:1; Zec 14:1-4
- IA11-369 Eagles' wings represent spiritual training and divine protection.
01-14-04 Rev 12:13-14; Deu 32:9-12; Mat 24:15-20; Isa 40:31; Zec 14:1-4; 1Co 8:4-13, 9:1-15,18-23
- IA11-370 God has never left any generation of believers without a place of refuge.
01-15-04 Rev 12:13-14; 1Ti 6:6-12; Dan 7:25, 12:7; Mat 24:15-31; Rev 1:7; Joe 2:30-31
- IA11-371 Satan will attempt to lure believers away from their place of refuge.
01-16-04 Rev 12:13-14; Rev 12:4,7,9; 2Co 11:3; Isa 14:12; 2Co 11:14-15; Mat 24:21-29; Rev 1:7; Joe 2:30-31
- IA11-372 The grace of God always meets the flexibility of believers who apply

doctrine in adverse conditions.
01-18-04 Rev 12:14-15; Rev 9:1-16; Isa 8:7-8, 43:1-7; Mat
7:24-27; Joh 10:28-30; Heb 12:1-3,26-29; Phi 4:13

IA11-373 Satan always uses an intermediary agent, a "middleman."
01-21-04 Rev 12:15,16; 1Jo3:11-15 Jud 1:8; Jam 3:2-10; Phi 1:21

IA11-374 Winners have a "survival kit" built up in their soul and the ability to be flexible in every circumstance of disaster.
01-22-04 Rev 12:15-17; Rom 2:28-29, 9:6; 2Sa 11:1

IA11-375 To be in the right place at the right time is one of the highest achievements of life.
01-23-04 Rev 12:15-17, 1Jo 4:4, 2Sa 11:1

IA11-376 Marriage in the attraction stage produces degeneracy in society.
01-25-04 Gen 2:18; Pro 12:4, 18:22, 31:10; 1Co 7:1-9,25-40; Pro 2:10-16, 6:20-26, 7:4-5,21-23;
2Co 6:12

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0190-1115 The third and final witness given in the Church-age is Christian marriage.
02-04-04 Phi 4:1-7, Eph 5:22-32, Rom 16:25-26, Isa 54:5, Phi 1:29, 2Co 13:1, 1Co 4:1, Mal 3:10

0190-1116 The "mystery" refers to what the first Adam lost at the fall and what the Last Adam restored, related to the angelic conflict.
02-05-04 Phi 4:7; Eph 5:22-32; Pro 24:5; Rev 4:11; Isa 43:7,21; Joh 15:8; Col 3:19; Rev 3:14, Rev 22:16

0190-1117 The pattern of intimacy between the man and the woman was established at the creation of man.
02-06-04 Gen 2:18-24; Eph 5:31-33; Deu 32:4; Eph 5:23-29; Col 3:19; Rev 3:14, Rev 22:16

0190-1118 The original design of marriage can now be experienced in the spiritual realm for two believers in the Church-age.
02-08-04 Phi 4:1-7; Mat 19:5; Gen 2:18-25; Eph 5:22-32; 1Co 2:7, 1Co 4:1, 1Co 15:22,45-49; 2Co 13:1; Mat 4:1-9

0190-1119 The standards and values of Christian marriage are higher than any other standards that have ever been given to mankind.
02-11-04 1Co 15:22,46; Eph 5:22-25,28-29; Mat 6:19; Joh 6:27; Col 3:19; Rev 3:14, Rev 22:16; 1Ti 3:16, 1Ti 5:21

0190-1120 Marriage of two believers is the proving ground for the mandates and duties which demand the highest form of virtue.
02-12-04 Mat 22:23-30; Eph 3:10; 1Pe 1:12; 1Ti 3:16, 1Ti 5:21; 1Co 11:10; Psa 101:6-7; 1Sa 20:23; Eph 5:25,32-33

0190-1121 Marriage is a testing ground for living the spiritual life.
02-13-04 Eph 5:22-25,32-33; Phi 4:11-13; 1Co 7:27-35; Luk 14:18-20; 1Co 1:26-29; Gal 4:16

0190-1122 No one ever waited on the Lord and became a loser.
02-15-03 1Co 7:8-15, Act 5:29, 1Pe 3:1-4, Mat 5:31-32, 1Co 7:35

PHIL 46

0190-1123 Ultra-supergrace is the sphere of the angelic conflict between the unfairness of the devil's world and the total fairness of God.

02-25-04 Phi 4:5-8; Rev 2:9-10,13; Jam 4:6; 2Ti 2:10-14, 2Ti 3:8-11; Eph 1:3-6,18-20, Eph 3:20-21; Mat 5:11; Phi 2:12

- 0190-1124 The battlefield of no man's land reveals those who have a pseudo positive volition and those who have a genuine positive volition.
02-26-04 Phi 4:8; Mat 23:27; Gal 6:12-13; Mat 23:3-4; Joh 16:2; Phi 2:2-7,12
- 0190-1125 We share everything Christ is and has, for the head and the body are united into one spiritual entity.
02-27-04 Phi 4:5-8; Mat 16:25; Joh 6:51; Psa 25:8-9, Psa 11:2; Eph 6:14; Jos 24:14; Psa 40:10-11; 2Ti 4:3-4
- 0190-1126 Truth will make you stable, secure, and certain about the future more than ever before.
02-29-04 Phi 4:8; Joh 18:38; Mat 23:1-3; Psa 25:5, 43:3; Joh 14:26; Psa 40:10-11, Psa 61:7; 2Pe 3:18; Phi 3:13b-14
- 0190-1127 God has provided and protected freedom, while Satan has had a plan to remove freedom since the human race began.
03-03-04 Phi 4:8, 1Co 2:4-16, Mat 7:20, 1Pe 2:9, Col 3:17, Gal 2:2, Joh 21:15-22, Rom 14:4-10, 2Th 3:11-15
- 0190-1128 No greater example exists of one being just while being treated unjustly than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
03-04-04 Phi 4:8, 1Pe 2:13-24, Joh 18:2-14, Joh 11:45-53, Deu 19:15, Isa 53:7, Mat 26:63-67, Isa 52:14
- 0190-1129 Every moment the Lord Jesus lived, He lived in the moment-by-moment Sabbath, the faith-rest life.
03-05-04 Phi 4:8, Heb 12:1-3; 1Ti 6:13, Joh 11:50, Mat 26:57-67, Deu 19:15, Joh 2:18-21, Isa 53:7, Isa 52:14
- 0190-1130 The day our Lord and Savior died was the darkest day in the history of time, yet it was also the brightest of all days.
03-07-04 Heb 12:2-3; Act 2:22-28; Isa 52:14; Luk 22:63-71, Luk 23:1-16, 19-28, 32-34, 43, 46; 2Co 5:21, Act 16:31
- 0190-1131 The six trials and the crucifixion.
03-10-04 Phi 4:8; Mat 26:61, 63-67; Joh 2:13-16; Mat 21:10-13, Mat 26:68-75; Luk 22:66-71; Joh 18:28-34
- 0190-1132 To be so close to Christ and yet reject Him, is to be far away for all eternity.
03-11-04 Phi 4:8; Joh 18:28-40; Luk 23:1-25; Mat 27:19, 24-25; Deu 21:6-9; Joh 19:1-16, 19-22; Act 4:26-28
- 0190-1133 The last words of our Lord are very important to us, because of who spoke them and where they were spoken from the Cross.
03-12-04 Phi 4:8; Luk 23:34, 43; Joh 19:26-27; Mat 27:46; Joh 19:28, 30; Luk 23:46; Psa 109:1-22, Psa 137:9

- 0190-1134 To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable in others, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.
- 03-14-04 Phi 4:8, Luk 23:34, Luk 7:36-50, Pro 23:7, Luk 15:1-2, Mat 9:10-13, Isa 44:22, Heb 8:12, 1Jo 2:12
- 0190-1135 Forgiving one another is not only a command, but it is needed for fellowship and unity in a local assembly.
- 03-17-04 Luk 23:34; Col 3:13; Luk 6:27-38; 1Co 5:1-13; 2Co 2:5-11; Jam 5:14-16; Mat 20:20-28, Mat 23:11-12

- 0190-1136 Throughout life, you will have an infinite number of occasions to apply forgiveness.
03-18-04 2Co 2:4-7; 1Co 5:1-6; Gal 5:1,13-17; Eph 4:30-5:19; 1Pe 4:1-5; 1Co 5:11-13; Mat 18:1-6,21-35
- 0190-1137 No forgiveness is impossible, we are simply unwilling.
03-19-04 Mat 18:21-35; 2Ki 4:1; Luk 23:34, Luk 22:64, Luk 23:11,37;Act 3:17; Phi 2:4-5; Mat 27:54; Act 7:51,54-56
- 0190-1138 "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
03-21-04 Col 1:13; 1Pe 1:3,23; Act 9:1-15; Luk 23:32-43;Isa 46:8-11; Mar 8:22-25; Mat 20:28; Num 21:4-9
- 0190-1139 "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."
03-24-04 Luk 23:32-43; Joh 19:19-20; Luk 19:37-40; 1Ti 2:3-6; 2Co 8:1-5,9, 2Co 9:6-15; Joh 3:16, Joh 12:42-43
- 0190-1140 What does it really mean to be near the Cross of Jesus?
03-25-04 Luk 23:34; Joh 19:25-27; Act 26:16-18; Col 2:13-15; Mat 20:20-28; 1Pe 5:6-10; Joh 2:1-11
- 0190-1141 Our Lord's fourth utterance from the Cross introduces a mystery that is very difficult for us to identify with.
03-26-04 Mar 15:34; Mat 27:45-47; Exo 3:1-5; Isa 49:14-16, Isa 53:10; Joh 8:29; 1Jo 3:5; Heb 13:5; Rom 8:31-32
- 0190-1142 The Lord came as a lamb, but He will come back as a lion.
03-28-04 Mat 27:46; Mat 5:10,17; Psa 22:1-21,26-31; Heb 13:5; Mat 27:39-43; 2Co 5:21; Heb 12:3; Isa 52:14
- 0190-1143 The great mystery of the darkness around the Cross.
03-31-04 Mat 27:45-47; Rom 8:19-22; Pro 22:5; Heb 6:7-8; Exo 10:21-23, Exo 11:1,4-5; Joh 12:27-33; Jud 1:20-23
- 0190-1144 The great mysteries surrounding the Cross.
04-01-04 Mat 27:46; Mat 13:13-16; Psa 22:1-2,7-8,18; Joh 13:13-17, Joh 15:13, Joh 19:28-30; 1Jo 1:1-3; Heb 4:14-16
- 0190-1145 Jesus Christ thirsted on the Cross that we might never thirst again.
04-02-04 Psa 69:21; Joh 19:28-30; Mat 27:33-34,48; 1Jo 1:1-3; Heb 4:14-16; Luk 16:23-24; Rev 7:16, 22:17
- 0190-1146 The shout of victory.
04-04-04 Joh 19:30; Heb 8:12, Heb 10:10-17; Phi 2:3-8; Joh 17:4; Mat 3:16-17, Mat 8:29; Col 2:16-17; Luk 24:25
- 0190-1147 Our Lord's final cry from the Cross.
04-07-04 Luk 23:44-46; Heb 2:9,14-15,27; 2Co 5:6,8; Joh 10:17-18; Mat 27:52-53

0190-1148 It's time for His vindication, justification, and divine support.
04-08-04 Luk 23:46; 1Pe 3:18-22; Mat 12:40, Mat 27:60; Eph 2:6; Jud 1:6; Eph 4:8-10; Rev 19:16;
Heb 2:9-17

- 0190-1149 It's time for His vindication, justification, and divine support, part 2.
04-09-04 Gen 50:20, 1Pe 3:18-22, Rev 19:16, Heb 2:9-17, 1Jo 4:18, Mat 12:40, Eph 4:8-10, Col 2:13-15
- 0190-1150 I am Satan.
04-11-04 Isa 14:12-14; Eze 28:12-15; 1Jo 5:19; Mat 7:22-23, Mat 23:24; Dan 5:27; Act 4:19
- 0190-1151 It's time for His vindication, justification, and divine support, part 3. The Triumphal Procession.
04-18-04 1Pe 3:18; Eph 4:8-10; Col 2:13-15; Zec 13:2; Act 2:33, Act 5:31; Rev 1:7, Rev 19:11-14; Heb 1:8
- 0190-1152 Motivation will be the basis for the evaluation of your life at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
04-21-04 Phi 4:8, 2Co 5:10, 1Co 3:13, Jam 4:17, Pro 16:2, 1Ti 3:1-6, 1Co 4:5, Heb 4:12-13, Mar 7:14-23
- 0190-1153 The categories of love found in members of the Royal Family of God.
04-22-04 Phi 4:8; Deu 6:4-5, Deu 10:12, Deu 11:13; Eph 4:11-13; 1Pe 1:8; Eph 3:14-19; Heb 6:10, Heb 12:3; 1Jo 4:15-21
- 0190-1154 The most horrible disasters of life cannot destroy true love.
04-23-04 Phi 4:8; 1Co 7:29,32-35; 1Pe 3:7; Sol 8:6-7; 1Co 6:18; Heb 13:4-6; Pro 5:15-23, 18:22; Tit 2:1
- 0190-1155 Friendship makes prosperity marvelous and lightens adversity by dividing and sharing it.
04-25-04 Phi 4:8; Pro 18:24; Pro 17:17; Rom 12:9; Pro 27:6, 9-10; 1Sa 18:1-4; Pro 16:28, Pro 17:9; Ecc 4:9-10
- 0190-1156 It is the Lord Jesus Christ who has the duty, responsibility, and prerogative to act as the supreme court judge.
04-28-04 Phi 4:8; Joh 7:24; Job 40:8; Eph 4:29; Rom 2:1, Rom 14:4,10; Jer 49:16; 1Co 13:4; 1Pe 3:8-9
- 0190-1157 Virtue in the believer is the visible manifestation of the visible.
04-30-04 Phi 4:8, 1Pe 2:9, 2Pe 1:1-11, Jam 4:14, Deu 30:19, Gal 2:20, Phi 2:5
- 0190-1158 True happiness depends on virtue manufactured inside the predesigned plan of God.
05-02-04 Phi 4:8, 2Pe 1:1-11, Joh 8:31-32, Luk 9:25, Deu 30:19, Jam 4:13-14, Gal 2:20, Phi 2:5
- 0190-1159 Being a slave is the greatest occupation in life when God is your master.
05-05-04 2Pe 1:1-11; Rom 8:32; Gal 2:20; Luk 2:40,52; Phi 2:5; Gen 17:15-16; Gal 4:22-23,30; Psa 26:3
- 0190-1160 Every believer starts out with the same amount of faith, but none of us end up that way.
05-09-04 Phi 4:8, 2Pe 1:1-3, Deu 30:19, Joh 15:4-5, 1Co 3:11-15, Heb 10:23, Rom 4:21, Psa 37:3, Mar 9:23
- 0190-1161 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 1.

- 05-23-04 2Pe 1:1-5, Mar 12:30, Heb 11:6, Gal 2:12-13, Rom 5:20, 1Co 4:9
- 0190-1162 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 2. The chorus line.
05-26-04 2Pe 1:5, 1Co 3:13, 1Pe 3:1-4, Phi 2:2, Gal 5:1, Mat 11:28-30, Phi 2:13-14
- 0190-1163 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 3. The three forms of unity.
05-27-04 2Pe 1:5, Eph 4:11-13, Col 1:9-10, Eph 5:14-17, Psa 90:12, Eph 2:8-10, 1Co 13:1-8, Mat 5:13-16
- 0190-1164 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 4. What is your chorus line?
05-28-04 2Pe 1:5; 2Co 5:14; 1Co 13:1-8; Mat 5:13-16; Heb 4:1-2; 2Pe 1:6; Pro 16:32, Pro 25:28; Jam 3:2; Psa 39:1
- 0190-1165 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 5. Routine is designed to help you organize your life.
05-30-04 2Pe 1:5-9; Pro 23:6-8; Mat 11:30; Ecc 9:10; Luk 16:10-12; Zec 4:10; Pro 16:32, Pro 25:28; 2Ti 2:4-5
- 0190-1166 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 6. The organized life.
06-02-04 2Pe 1:5-6; Neh 8:18; Pro 8:30,34; Jam 3:2; Rom 6:12; 1Co 9:24-27; Heb 5:11-14; Phi 2:1, 3:10
- 0190-1167 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 7. The baby wants the spectacular, while the adult cultivates habits.
06-03-04 Heb 5:11-14, 1Co 1:9, 2Co 13:14, Phm 1:6, 1Jo 1:3, Heb 10:25, Isa 5:20, Joh 4:23-24, 1Ti 4:7-8
- 0190-1168 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 8. The attitude of willing to be victorious and the will to excel are what endures.
06-04-04 2Pe 1:5-7; Rom 8:35-37; Luk 8:15, 21:19; Rom 5:3-4; 1Ti 6:3-6,11; 1Jo 2:9-11, 3:10,15-17, 4:20-21
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- 0190-1169 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 9. Love that has virtue is love that loves for no personal reason.
06-06-04 2Pe 1:5-7; Mat 12:46-50; Gal 6:6-10; 1Jo 3:14-18; Rom 5:5; 1 Jo 2:9-10,15-17,20-21; Mat 25:34-40
- 0190-1170 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 10. Impersonal love is proclaimed the ultimate Christian virtue.
06-09-04 2Pe 1:5-7; Rom 12:10; Gal 5:13-17; Joh 13:1; Mat 10:37-38; Joh 13:13-15,34-35; Mat 25:34-40
- 0190-1171 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 11. Personal love is for interaction with a few; impersonal love benefits all.
06-10-04 1Pe 1:5-7, Luk 6:20-38, 1Co 13:13, Joh 13:34, Mat 25:40, Rom 12:9, 2Pe 1:8, Mat 13:22

- 0190-1172 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 12. The policy of impersonal love is simple "integrity toward all."
 06-11-04 2Pe 1:5-9; Joh 13:34; Mat 25:40; Rom 12:9; Mat 13:22, Mat 15:1-9, Mat 23:24
- 0190-1173 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 13. What the dramatic chorus line will accomplish in your life.
 06-16-04 2Pe 1:5-11; Mat 13:22, Mat 15:1-9, Mat 23:24; Ecc 6:12; Hos 8:7-8; Jam 4:13-15; Mat 7:24-28; Ecc 2:17-18
- 0190-1174 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 14. All believers are to be motivated by the calling of God and election of God.
 06-17-04 2Pe 1:8-11; 2Ti 2:15; Mat 5:16; Jam 2:15-26; 1Co 3:13-15; Tit 1:16, Tit 2:14, Tit 3:14; 2Co 5:14-6:2
- 0190-1175 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 15. The divine invitation to participate in the greatest victory ever won.
 06-18-04 2Pe 1:8-10; Rom 11:29; 2Co 5:14-6:2; Joh 1:12; Mat 11:28; Joh 5:39-40, Joh 6:35-37, 44-45, 65, Joh 7:37-39

- 0190-1176 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 16. The great character trait "contentment" is the basis or all happiness.
06-20-04 2Pe 1:8-10; Jam 1:14-16, Jam 4:13-15; Hos 8:7-8; Ecc 6:12; Mat 7:24-28; Ecc 2:17-18; Pro 4:23, Pro 23:26
- 0190-1177 The illustration of virtue in Greek drama, part 17. The hope of your calling.
06-30-04 2Pe 1:8-10; Mat 11:28; Joh 5:39-40, Joh 6:35-37; Rom 11:6; Rom 1:1-7, Rom 8:28-30, Rom 9:11,22-24; Eph 4:4
- 0190-1178 The "calling of God" is the doorway to election, where the believer has the opportunity to receive God's highest and best.
07-01-04 Eph 4:1; 2Th 1:11; Col 2:14-15; Rev 3:4, Rev 22:12; 2Th 2:13-14; 1Th 2:9-12; Phi 3:11, Phi 4:4-7; 1Pe 2:21
- 0190-1179 The doctrine of election, part 1: Be motivated even more to make certain about His calling and election.
07-02-04 2Pe 1:10; Rom 8:28-33; Dan 12:2; Rom 5:12,15-19, 11:29; Deu 7:6; Isa 42:1; Col 3:12
- 0190-1180 The doctrine of election, part 2: Election belongs only to the believer and should give him tremendous confidence.
07-04-04 2Pe 1:8-10; Rom 8:28-33; Eph 1:3-4; Deu 7:6; Isa 42:1; Col 3:12; Rev 13:8; Act 2:22-23; Isa 52:13-15
- 0190-1181 The doctrine of election, part 3: An election from God plus a plan from God equals a destiny.
07-07-04 2Pe 1:10, Mat 3:13-17, Heb 9:14, 1Ki 19:18, Rom 11:2-4, Rom 9:1-8, 1Th 1:4, Eph 1:4, 2Pe 1:11
- 0190-1182 The doctrine of election, part 4: The Church-age believer must understand his relationship to God and to man and history.
07-08-04 Psa 149:4, Eph 1:5, Col 3:12-14, Tit 1:1, 2Pe 1:10-11, 2Co 9:6, Luk 6:38, Pro 11:24-25
- 0190-1183 The doctrine of election, part 5: The election of the Church.
07-09-04 Col 3:12-14, 2Pe 1:10-11, 2Co 9:6, 2Co 5:8, 2Pe 3:9, Mar 10:29-31, Luk 18:28-30, 2Co 6:10
- 0190-1184 The doctrine of election, part 6: Tapping into the eternal riches that God elected you to receive.
07-11-04 2Pe 1:10-11; Ecc 5:10-11; Pro 10:22, 28:30, 30:7-9; Pro 11:28, 23:4-5, 28:11; Hag 1:5-7; Luk 9:23-26
- 0190-1185 The doctrine of election, part 7: Spiritual blessings in time go to the rich and the poor.
07-14-04 2Pe 3:9, Eph 3:20, 1Co 15:33-34, Pro 10:22, Act 5:29, Luk 9:23-26
- 0190-1186 The doctrine of election, part 8: Election and the believer's escrow account.
07-15-04 Heb 6:4-20, Eph 1:3-4, Act 20:32-35

0190-1187 The doctrine of election, part 9: As the author of the divine plan, God the Father is the author of all worship, praise, and honor.
07-16-04 1Pe 1:3-4; Eph 1:3-4; Act 20:32-35; Pro 8:18, 23:6

- 0190-1188 The doctrine of election, part 10: Your name was written in heaven before the foundation of the world.
07-18-04 Col 1:9-12, 3:23-24; 1Pe 1:3-8; Rev 21:7; Eph 1:3-4,11,13-14,18; 2Co 4:16-18, 5:7; Heb 13:5-6
- 0190-1189 The doctrine of election, part 11: The spiritual and temporal blessings for the Church-age believer.
07-21-04 Eph 1:3-4; 1Co 15:10; Job 5:19-27; Col 3:23-24; Pro 8:18; Psa 23:6; Pro 3:15-18, 4:8-22,32-36
- 0190-1190 The doctrine of election, part 12: The principles of selection and election.
07-22-04 Eze 18:4; Num 16:22; Rom 5:12,15-19; Tit 3:4-7; Col 2:6, 3:23-24; Eph 6:6-7; Job 33:4; Isa 44:2,24
- 0190-1191 The doctrine of election, part 13: The greatest opportunity ever extended to the human race.
07-23-04 Mat 19:4; Col 1:15-17; Gal 3:28; Col 3:23-24; Eph 6:6-7; Job 33:4; Isa 44:2,24; Ecc 12:7; Deu 32:4
- 0190-1192 The doctrine of election, part 14: Only God can give life.
07-25-04 Psa 22:9-10; Heb 10:5; Ecc 6:4-5; Luk 1:35; Exo 21:22-23; Job 3:11-16, 5:7; 14:1; Psa 58:3; Ecc 3:2
- 0190-1193 The doctrine of election, part 15: The limits of human life are from birth to death.
07-28-04 Isa 44:2,4; Psa 22:9-10; Mat 1:20; Exo 21:22-23; Job 10:18-19; Job 3:11-16, 5:7, 14:1; Psa 58:3
- 0190-1194 The doctrine of election, part 16: In the divine decree is a precreation record of each one of our lives.
07-29-04 Luk 12:6-7, Rev 3:5, 2Jo 1:8-9, 1Co 3:13, Jam 1:23-24, Gal 5:1-4, Heb 12:15
- 0190-1195 The doctrine of election, part 17: The fulfillment of God's predesigned plan leads to a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom.
07-30-04 Rev 3:5, 22:12; 1Co 3:1-3; Jam 4:4; Jam 1:23-24, 4:8; Gal 5:1-4
- 0190-1196 The doctrine of election, part 18: Servanthood.
08-01-04 1Co 15:39-42, 2Ti 4:7-8, Jam 1:12, 1Co 9:24-27, 1Th 2:19, 1Pe 5:4, Rev 3:11, Mar 10:43-45
- 0190-1197 The doctrine of election, part 19: The order of the morning star is the highest manifestation of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ.
08-15-04 1Co 3:11-15; Phi 3:1; Rev 22:16; Mat 5:13-14; Col3:1-4; Rev 2:26-28; Rom 12:4-11; 1Co 12:14-27
- 0190-1198 The doctrine of election, part 20: The equal privilege of election manifested by the universal priesthood of all Church-age believers.
08-18-04 Gal 3:28; Rom 14:4-12,22; 1Pe 2:5-9; Rom 12:5; Heb 2:10; Eph 1:18; 1Co 4:5

- 0190-1199 The doctrine of election, part 21: The only human dependence of the royal priesthood is the divine provision of your pastor.
08-19-04 Rom 14:4,10,12,22; 1Pe 2:5,9; Eph 4:11-12; Act 20:28; Rom 12:2; 1Pe 5:1-3; 1Co 4:5;
Mat 7:1-3
- 0190-1200 The doctrine of election, part 22: God will not permit anyone to take His place in judging or evaluating other believers.
08-20-04 Rom 8:33-39; Isa 62:3; Isa 50:9; Rev 3:11; Mat 5:45, 6:25-34; Rev 14:13; Psa 71:14-19,
145:1-6
- 0190-1201 What are you letting your mind dwell upon?
08-22-04 Phi 4:1-8, Mat 6:21, 1Sa 16:7, Jer 9:23-24, Rom 12:2, Luk 12:37, Deu 32:4, Act 20:28,
1Pe 5:3

- 0190-1202 Spiritual metabolism, part 1: Knowing is never enough.
08-25-04 Phi 4:9,11; Joh 15:20; Act 20:27-32; Mat 12:30; Jam 2:19; Eph 4:11-13
- 0190-1203 Spiritual metabolism, part 2: Without metabolism, there is no life.
08-26-04 Phi 4:9; 1Co 8:1; Jam 2:19; Joh 6:48-66; Heb 4:12, 5:11; Pas 119:50,93,107; 2Ti 4:2; Job 12:10, 33:4
- 0190-1204 Spiritual metabolism, part 3: The grace process of metabolism in eating and breathing.
08-27-04 Phi 4:9, Eph 4:11-13, Gal 4:16, Psa 4:8, Pro 3:21-24, Job 32:8, Rom 12:1-2
- 0190-1205 Spiritual metabolism, part 4: The Word of God builds us up and tears us down.
08-29-04 Phi 4:9; Joh 6:48-63; Joh 1:1,14; Heb 4:12; Act 20:32; 2Ti 4:2; Jer 15:16; Rom 12:1-2; Rev 5:2-5
- 0190-1206 Spiritual metabolism, part 5: Doctrine is the power and energy that the Christian uses to produce divine good.
09-01-04 Phi 4:9; Rom 12:1-2; 2Co 3:18, 4:7; Eph 1:15-23, 3:20-21; Jer 3:15; Joh 14:26; Joh 14:16
- 0190-1207 Spiritual metabolism, part 6: The mentorship of the Holy Spirit.
09-02-04 Joh 14:16; Joh 4:24; 2Co 13:14; Act 5:2-4; Mat 28:19; Rom 8:8-11; 1Co 3:16, 6:19; 1Co 2:9-16
- 0190-1208 Spiritual metabolism, part 7: Divine inspiration, divine power for the spiritual life, and Biblical warnings.
09-03-04 1Ti 3:16-17; Joh 16:12; 2Pe 1:20-21; Eph 5:18; Gal5: 1,13-18,22-25; 1Th 5:19; Eph 4:30; Act 4:32-5:11
- 0190-1209 Spiritual metabolism, part 8: Spiritual metabolism related to the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
09-05-04 Joh 6:28-29,35,40,47-51; Exo 3:1-14; Jam 1:15,22; Mat 4:4; Joh 1:14, 21:15-17; Rev 5:1-12
- 0190-1210 Spiritual metabolism, part 9: The spiritual life is a uniform system of biblical principles, not a uniform personality.
09-08-04 1Co 4:16-17, 11:1-2; 2Ti 3:5; 1Co 12:12-20; Rom 6:13,16,19; 2Pe 3:14-17; Act 13:44-45, 17:2-5
- 0190-1211 Spiritual metabolism, part 10: You cannot handle your problems unless you have metabolized doctrine.
09-09-04 2Pe 3:10-18; Luk 9:25; 1Jo 3:10; Exo 23:2; Mat 7:13-14, Mat 22:14; Rev 12:9; 1Th 5:24, Phi 1:6, 2:13
- 0190-1212 Spiritual metabolism, part 11: Metabolized doctrine will give you permanent values with all other values subservient to them.
09-10-04 2Pe 3:10-18; Luk 9:25; 1Jo 3:8,10; Exo 23:2; Mat 7:13-14, Mat 22:14; Rev 12:9; Phi 1:6, 2:13

0190-1213 Spiritual metabolism, part 12: The Bible was penned by many authors, yet it is an integrated harmonious design.

09-12-04 2Pe 3:10-18; Heb 12:26-29; 2Ti 3:16; Isa 46:8-11; Isa 41:21-24; Mat 19:26; Isa 40:8; Rev 22:18-19

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0190-1214 Recap of the 2004 Albany Conference: The Church at Thyatira.

09-19-04 Rev 2:18-29, 2Ti 2:1-4, Heb 12:5-13, Rev 3:14-20, Phi 3:19, 1Jo 3:1-2

- 0190-1215 Spiritual metabolism, part 13: The difference between having gnosis(knowledge) and epignosis knowledge (wisdom).
09-22-04 1Ti 2:3-4, 2Ti 3:1-7, 2Ti 2:23-26, Col 1:9-10, 2Pe 3:17-18, Psa 101:6-7, Mat 7:12-20, Pro 16:18
- 0190-1216 Spiritual metabolism, part 14: Perfecttion is found only in heaven and in the person of the perfect God-man, the Lord Jesus.
09-23-04 Phi 4:9, Col 1:24-29, 1Co 2:1-5
- 0190-1217 Spiritual metabolism, part 15: Headship means responsibility assumed.
09-24-04 Phi 4:9; Heb 13:7; 1Ti 5:17; Isa 54:17; Pro 8:30; Act 20:28; Tit 1:5-9; 1Co 14:40; Joh 5:38, Joh 8:47
- 0190-1218 Spiritual metabolism, part 16: Unrealisitc expectations and role model arrogance.
09-26-04 Phi 4:9, Isa 2:22, Psa 62:9, Job 40:6-8, 2Co 5:16, 1Co 2:1-4
- 0190-1219 Prosperity Special, part 1: Application and practice result in peace and prosperity.
09-29-04 Phi 4:9-23; Jam 4:1-3; 3Jo 1:2; Psa 24:1, Psa 50:10;Mat 7:7-11; Rom 8:32; Psa 84:11; Gal 3:6-9,13-14
- 0190-1220 Prosperity Special, part 2: God wants us to possess prosperity, wealth, and money, but He doesn't want them to possess us.
09-30-04 Phi 4:9, Psa 112:1-3, Gen 1:11, 2Co 9:9-11, Mat 28:18, Luk 10:1-8, Mar 8:13-21, 2Co 9:6-12
- 0190-1221 Prosperity Special, part 3: Miraculous things happen to positive believers in the realm of prosperity.
10-01-04 Phi 4:9, Mal 3:8-12, Mar 10:29-30, Pro 3:9-10, Pro 11:25; Mat 21:1-7; Joh 14:12-14; Pro 8:14-18
- 0190-1222 Prosperity Special, part 4: The divine design in the differences between men and women.
10-03-04 Phi 4:9; Psa 11:3; 1Co 11:7-12; 1Pe 3:1-7; Sol 3:1-4, Sol 4:1-5; Eph 5:33
- 0190-1223 Prosperity Special, part 5: What does it mean to keep God first?
10-06-04 Mat 6:33; 1Ki 3:5-12; Psa 4:4; Mat 7:8, Mat 10:34-39; Mat 12:46-49, Mat 13:53-57; Psa 101:1-6; Luk 9:23
- 0190-1224 Prosperity Special, part 6: "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."
10-07-04 Pro 16:16, 23:23; 2Ch 26:3-5; Pro 8:14-18; Isa 55:7-11; 3Jo 1:2-8; Eph 4:22-24; 2Co 10:3-5
- 0190-1225 Prosperity Special, part 7: We must renew our minds so that we will understand God's way for prosperity.
10-08-04 Psa 23:1-3; Eph 4:22-24; Psa 51:10; Pro 3:5-6; 2Co 10:3-5; Phi 4:10-17; 2Ti 2:15; Jos 1:8; Psa 1:1-3
- 0190-1226 Prosperity Special, part 8: The games people play.

10-10-04 Phi 4:9; Rom 15:7; Jam 1:19-20; Mat 12:34; Pro 18:21; Jam 1:19; Ecc 5:3; 1Co 13:1-8; Ecc 7:9

0190-1227 Prosperity Special, part 9: What causes God to become a rewarder of those who seek Him.

10-14-04 Heb 11:6, Rom 15:1-3, Gen 14:22-24, Deu 6:10-19

0190-1228 Prosperity Special, part 10: The God of prosperity is a rewarder of those who diligently seek for Him.

10-15-04 Heb 11:6, 2Jo 1:6-9, Jos 1:8, Psa 1:1-3

- 0190-1229 Prosperity Special, part 11: How to prosper in every area of our lives, financially, spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally.
10-17-04 Psa 112:1-3; Mat 6:33, Mat 7:7-8, Mat 13:44-46; 1Ti 6:6-12
- 0190-1230 Prosperity Special, part 12: God's perspective on work and discipline.
10-21-04 Col 3:22-25, Num 11:1-6, Pro 10:4, Pro 6:6-11, Ecc 9:10, Luk 17:7-10, Jam 1:22-25
- 0190-1231 Prosperity Special, part 13: The key to activating God's guidelines and instructions to prosper inside our heart.
10-22-04 Mar 4:3-20; Psa 112:5-8; Pro 11:24; Pro 4:23, Pro 13:13, Pro 16:20
- 0190-1232 Prosperity Special, part 14: The Golden Rule, God's laws of sowing and reaping.
10-24-04 Jos 1:1-8; Pro 23:7; Deu 11:18; Mat 7:24-27; Jam 1:22,25; Deu 28:1-12; Gal 6:6-10; Mat 7:12,20
- 0190-1233 God's geographical will and the danger of emotional attachments.
10-27-04 Phi 4:1-10; Act 21:1-24; Isa 56:11; Jer 10:21
- 0190-1234 The apostle of grace gives in to the attacks of legalism.
10-28-04 Phi 4:10; Act 21:4,11-24; Gal 3:10-14, Gal 3:23-4:7, Gal 4:21-31; Gal 5:1-4; Act 13:44-46
- 0190-1235 When a believer allows his feelings and emotions to rule, he refuses good advice and takes bad advice.
10-29-04 Phi 4:10,18; Act 21:20-24; Rom 2:14, Rom 6:14; Act 13:44-46; Num 6:1-8; Jam 4:17; Gal 5:1
- 0190-1236 Two are better than one.
10-31-04 Phi 4:10; Jud 1:21-22; 1Jo 3:17; Gen 2:18; Ecc 4:9-12; 1Jo 2:15-16; 1Co 12:13-26; Psa 37:24
- 0190-1237 The doctrine of compassion, part 1: God delights in forgiving, edifying, and reconciling.
11-03-04 Phi 4:10; Rom 12:8; 2Co 1:5-6; Lam 3:22-23; Gal 6:1-2; Mat 9:35-38, 14:14; Psa 78:32-39; Psa 51:1
- 0190-1238 The doctrine of compassion, part 2: The Lord is compassionate to His people, and He expects them to be compassionate to others.
11-04-04 Phi 4:10; Psa 78:32-39; 2Sa 12:1-7,14-19; Neh 9:19,28,31; Mat 9:13; Col 3:12-13
- 0190-1239 The doctrine of compassion, part 3: "What kind of neighbor am I?"
11-05-04 Luk 15:20, 1Pe 3:8, Exo 33:18-19, Psa 103:1-4, 2Sa 15:1-6, Jam 2:15-18, 1Jo 3:16-18, Luk 10:25-37
- 0190-1240 The doctrine of compassion, part 4: "What kind of neighbor am I?"
11-07-04 Mar 16:15, Deu 6:4-9, Luk 10:25-37, Jam 2:15-18,1Jo 3:16-18, Mat 25:34-40, Isa 53:1-12
- 0190-1241 The church at Thyatira: A recap of the 2004 California Conference.
11-14-04 Rev 2:18-21, Jer 3:6-15, Eze 16:1-63, Psa 119: 65-67,71-75

0190-1242 Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family.
11-17-04 Jam 3:1, Col 1:28, 1Pe 5:1-4, Phi 4:10, Jam 2:15-16, Phi 2:25-30, Rom 15:26-27, 2Co 8-9

0190-1243 Grace giving with impersonal love reveals your gratitude to God.
11-18-04 Phi 4:10; 2Co 8:1-14, 9:6-14; Phi 2:3-5; Joh 3:16; Rom 15:26-27

- 0190-1244 Feelings and Emotions: The difference between your feelings and emotions and the thought content of your soul, Part 1.
11-19-04 Phi 4:10; Rom 8:5; Rom 12:3,16; Rom 14:6; Luk 12:15-19.
- 0190-1245 Feelings and Emotions: How your feelings and emotions can deceive you, Part 2.
11-21-04 Phi 4:10; Col 3:12-13; Rom 8:5-8; Gal 5:17.
- 0190-1246 Feelings and Emotions, part 3: The emotions within us are often at odds with the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
11-24-04 Phi 4:10, Gal 5:17, Jer 13:23, Joh 8:32, Rom 7:15-8:2, Eph 5:20
- 0190-1247 Feelings and Emotions, part 4: The basic emotional problem that we all have to deal with is the emotion of fear.
11-26-04 Phi 4:10, Col 3:12-13, Rom 8:5-8, Gal 5:17
- 0190-1248 Feelings and Emotions, part 5: The solution to the emotion of fear.
11-28-04 Heb 2:14-15; 1Jo 4:17-19; Rom 8:32; Deu 31:6,8; Isa 41:10; 2Ti 1:7-8; Psa 56:3; Exo 14:9-14
- 0190-1249 How important is Bible doctrine?
12-01-04 Phi 4:10-12; Act 18:24-26; Joh 18:33-37; Psa 19:7-11; Pro 3:13-18, 8:10-19; Joh 8:31-32
- 0190-1250 The zoe-life, part 1: A life filled with inner happiness and contentment.
12-02-04 Phi 4:11-12; Joh 14:6, 10:10; Eph 3:14-21; Isa 55:8-9; Joh 4:14, 20:31; Jer 30:14,17; Heb 11:6
- 0190-1251 The zoe-life, part 2: "Zoe" is the of supergrace life, which is the objective of Bible doctrine resident in the soul.
12-03-04 Phi 4:11-12; Joh 14:6; Joh 5:24, 14:27; Phi 4:7-8; Jer 30:14,17; Heb 11:6; Gal 5:22-23; Joh 7:38-39
- 0190-1252 The zoe-life, part 3: The zoe-life is God's fantastic grace provision, far beyond anything you have ever asked for.
12-05-04 Phi 4:10-12; Eph 3:16-21; Gal 4:14-16; Joh 5:24, Joh 7:38-39; Phi 2:13-14; 1Co 2:9-16; Rom 11:34-36
- 0190-1253 The zoe-life, part 4: "Now" is your chance to seize the zoe-life!
12-12-04 Phi 4:11-12; 1Jo 3:2; 2Ti 4:6-8; 1Co 9:24,26; 1Ti 6:12; Heb 9:27; Joh 1:6-7, 3:15; 1Pe 1:3-8; Phi 1:21
- 0190-1254 The zoe-life, part 5: The manifestation and impact eternal life can have upon the believer in time.
12-15-04 Phi 4:11-12, Rom 11:2-5
- 0190-1255 The Doctrine of Contentment, part 1: Your ability to adapt to any situation in life.
12-16-04 Phi 4:11, Mat 13:15-16, Zep 3:12-13, 1Th 4:9-12, 1Ti 6:6-8, 2Co 12:9-10, Heb 13:5

0190-1256 The Doctrine of Contentment, part 2: The four types of testing that strengthen your contentment.

12-17-04 Phi 4:11; 2Co 12:7-10; Rom 12:3.

0190-1257 The Doctrine of Contentment; part 3. How to handle the seemingly boring mundane things in life.

12-19-04 Phi 4:11; 1Ti 6:6-8; 2Sa 11:1-2; 1Co 9:24-27.

- 0190-1258 The Doctrine of Contentment; part 4. Contentment related to lifestyle and the spiritual life.
12-22-04 Phi 4:11-13; Heb 13:5; Ecc 5:10; Ecc 7:12; Ecc 10:19.
- 0190-1259 Christmas Special, Part 1. There was no room for Him in the inn.
12-23-04 Luk 2:1-7; Jam 1:17; 2Co 9:15.
- 0190-1260 Christmas Special, Part 2. Things Mary pondered in her heart.
12-24-04 Luk 2:1-19.

DEGENERACY AND SCAR TISSUE OF THE SOUL

2 Timothy 3:1-4

01/04/2004

As the New Year begins, we remember that holidays were designed to add capacity to life in a nation and to give people a time to think and reflect on God's blessings, and on the changes we have seen in our lives and in the world in the past year and even the last century. The last 100 years have seen major, unprecedented changes in our nation, especially in technology and our way of life (as predicted in Dan 12:4), and of course the intensification of the conflict between God's client nation and the evil of Islam. The coming of the new year is a reminder that in Isa 40:31, *"Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."* Those of us who have faced adversity this past year can remember Lam 3:21-28, *"This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope [confidence]. The Lord's lovingkindnesses [grace expressions] indeed never cease [are never exhausted], for His compassions never fail. [This was said when the nation had fallen into ruins and was being taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar.] They are new [fresh] every morning; great is Your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion [inheritance],' says my soul, 'Therefore I have confidence in Him.' The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the deliverance of the Lord. It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth [vigor], when he has strength. Let him sit alone and be silent since He [God] has laid it [undeserved suffering] on him."*

Throughout the world people do not have holidays as we do, because they are not free as a nation. Many people throughout history have lost their freedom for many reasons, the most obvious being rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. So many nations throughout the world believe in a "god," but not the God of the Bible, and have fallen into terrible slavery and bondage. These include the Muslims in the Middle East and Africa, the Hindus in India, and the Buddhists in China, and the list goes on and on.

Even nations who once followed the God of the Bible have been placed in bondage. The first great client nation to God, the nation of Israel, lost its freedom on three occasions, under the administration of the fifth cycle of discipline. There have been many holocausts in history, Gentile as well as Jewish. Any group of people who continue to make negative decisions, over a period of three or four generations, inevitably come to a major national or racial disaster—the "third and fourth generation" curse. This disaster, the holocaust judgment, is the direct result of their own negative volition, not outside sources. Any body of people, whether a nation or race, must continue to rebel for three or four generations before they are overtaken by historical disaster and are destroyed. The Jews eventually lost all personal sense of destiny through their rejection of the Gospel and Bible doctrine.

This brings us to the subject of holocausts. "Holocaust" means devastation. It includes all persecution of the Jews and violent expressions of anti-Semitism. We still see the evil of religion today in those who make violent expressions against the Jews, all the while quoting the Bible and talking about how to live righteously. This should not be surprising, as we are told in 2Co 11:13-14, *"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles [messengers] of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."* Anti-Semitism is hostility toward the Jews on the part of a person, group, organization, or nation.

In Gen 6:10, *"Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth."* The descendants of Shem are classified as the Semitic race of peoples; Semites include Akkadians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Arabs, Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Midianites, some Amenians, some Ethiopians, and Jews. The term anti-Semitism applies only to Jews as a race and nation, and not to all Semitic peoples. Anti-

Semitism, therefore, is defined as intolerance, hatred, prejudice, opposition, persecution, and violence against the Jewish people. Since the Jews are a part of the angelic conflict and God still has covenants with them, Satan sponsors all anti-Semitism. Satan has two major objectives in the unfolding of anti-Semitism:

1. The historical objective, in which Satan sought to keep our Lord from being born, and then to kill His humanity before He reached the Cross, Mat 26:39. Satan obviously failed in this objective, and we see the overflow of his anger in historical anti-Semitism at the present time.
2. The prophetic objective, in which Satan seeks to destroy Israel before the Second Advent, so that the four unconditional covenants to Israel cannot be fulfilled.

God has put an invisible wall of fire around the Jews to preserve their race throughout all historical anti-Semitism, but the primary reason for the Jewish holocausts and their persecution is their own degeneracy.

1. Degeneracy is the decline from normal or superior standards to inferior or subnormal standards. We are seeing the manifestation of this in our country right now. That which is abnormal is becoming acceptable. Three generations ago, immorality was not accepted as an alternate lifestyle, and marriage was considered to be a sacred institution, rather than a slot machine hoping to hit the jackpot...and if not, try it again.
2. Degeneracy also means loss of integrity, resulting in a state of deterioration, 2Ti 3:1-4, *“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”*
3. Degeneracy is the process of passing from the higher to the lower, therefore to decline progressively. The progressive decline of degeneracy includes three stages:
 - a. Internal explosion, the internal collapse or breakdown. This is an inward burst of frustration. It means that the individual collapses inwardly from external pressure. He enters into operation “blame game” and victimology.
 - b. External explosion, the release of inner frustration and pressure. “Explosion” is a synonym for falling apart overtly, caused by the sins of the arrogance complex.
 - c. Withdrawal or apostasy, the degeneracy of declining progressively. Slowly but surely the decline takes place, resulting in the blackout of the soul and scar tissue of the soul, and therefore religious or historical degeneracy.

The Lord allows historical degeneracy to persecute religious degeneracy, as when Hitler and Nazi Germany persecuted the Jews of Europe, or when Alexander III persecuted the Jews in Russia. The religious degeneracy of the Jews is the decline from the superior standards of the Mosaic Law to the inferior standards of internal and external explosion and apostasy. Their historical degeneracy is the decline from the superior standards of establishment power and authority to the inferior standards that distort authority into tyranny, resulting in persecution. Degeneracy also occurs in Christianity when the superior standard of the predesigned plan of God is rejected, and the inferior standard of legalism, works orientation, the “dog and pony” show, or antinomianism is substituted as the Christian way of life.

In Deu 4:19-27 and Deu 28:63-68, God told Israel that if she continued to rebel against Him, she would suffer more persecution than any other nation in human history. In Jer 29, because she rejected the word of God, Israel was told that she would be a “plague” to people wherever she went, Jer 29:16-18, *“For thus says the Lord concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your brothers who did not go with you into exile, thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Behold, I am sending upon them the sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like split-open figs that cannot be eaten due to rotteness. And I will pursue them with the*

sword, with famine and with pestilence; and I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and a horror, and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them.”

History records for us such events as the following:

- The Crusaders attacked the Jews under the pretext that they were “god killers”; in the year 1096, 12,000 Jews were killed in the Rhine-land.
- On November 1, 1290, Jews were expelled from England under penalty of hanging. They were not readmitted until 370 years later.
- In 1298, 100,000 Jews were killed in Franconia, Bavaria, and Austria.
- In September 1306, 100,000 Jews were expelled from France under the threat of death.
- In 1348, the Jews were accused of causing the black plague, and a million of them were massacred.
- On August 2, 1492, the inquisition drove 300,000 Jews out of Spain.
- From 1648-1658 about 400,000 Polish Jews were killed.
- Under Adolph Hitler, six million European Jews were butchered in concentration camps in the early 1940’s.

The Jews were not even able to return to their homeland, Isa 5:6, *“And I will lay it waste; it will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.”*; Zec 7:14, *“But I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them, so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.”*

The Jews have suffered tremendous adversity because of the scar tissue in their soul. Scar tissue of the soul, also known as hardness of the heart, is the result of prolonged residence and function inside the cosmic system. There is a logical retrogression in which blackout of the soul precedes or accompanies scar tissue of the soul. What blackout of the soul is to the left lobe of the soul (mind), scar tissue of the soul is to the right lobe (heart). It all begins with what goes into the mind, and then it ends up with what has taken place in the heart. Blackout of the soul is the believer saying “No” to doctrine, which opens a vacuum in the left lobe that draws in false concepts. Blackout of the soul then spreads like a disease and results in the right lobe disorder of scar tissue of the soul. Scar tissue of the soul has a detrimental effect on every part of the soul. It results in loss of perceptive ability in the frame of reference. The believer with scar tissue of the soul can listen to doctrine every day and still react to pressure and remain in ignorance. In his memory center, he forgets what doctrine he has learned and cannot apply doctrine, and his spiritual momentum is halted. In his vocabulary storage, all technical language related to perception and application is gradually destroyed. In his categorical storage, scar tissue of the soul destroys categorical doctrinal understanding, such as the rationales used in the faith-rest drill.

Scar tissue of the soul destroys doctrinal norms and standards, therefore wiping out the conscience. This loss of norms and standards drags the believer into the plan of Satan. Scar tissue of the soul is a guarantee of the destruction of true virtue-love, and personal love cannot survive without the integrity of impersonal love. Scar tissue of the soul is the spiritual disorder of involvement in the cosmic system, resulting in complete loss of momentum, and eventuating in the most intense discipline from God. Scar tissue of the soul can also be found in unbelievers, as when the Lord Jesus Christ called the Pharisees “blind guides” and those who followed them “blind men,” Mat 15:11-14, *“Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.” Then the disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?” But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”* He said in Mat 23:16-19, *“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is*

obligated. You fools and blind men; which is more important, the gold, or the temple that sanctified the gold? And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering upon it, he is obligated.' You blind men, which is more important, the offering or the altar that sanctifies the offering?" Paul taught about the unbeliever's blackout of the soul in 2Co 4:3-4, *"In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving."* In Rom 11:7-8, *"God has given them a spirit of stupor, 'Eyes to see not, ears to hear not,' down to this very day."*

Scar tissue of the soul was manifested in the Pharaoh of the Exodus generation, Pharaoh Thutmose III, Rom 9:17, *"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.'" Pharaoh represented all the power of human rulership, but God demonstrated that this did not even compare to His own power, and, in so doing, He evangelized the entire world. Pharaoh had unprecedented and unequalled scar tissue of the soul. He revealed his hardness and scar tissue during the plagues of Egypt. In the first five plagues, he continually hardened his own heart. God still permitted him to live for the next five plagues, and Pharaoh had many opportunities to change his mind, Exo 7:22, 8:15,32, 9:34-35. Therefore, when the scripture says that "God hardened his heart," it simply means that God allowed him live to express his scar tissue of the soul, far beyond what anyone else had ever done in the past.*

An individual can hear and see the truth through miracles, but because of scar tissue of the soul, it makes no impression. The believer in the cosmic system is not impressed with miracles; he is only impressed with the lie. God did not coerce Pharaoh's volition, Pharaoh was a free agent with a free will; in fact, his life was extended by divine decree. God uses even the wrath of man to praise Him, Psa 76:10. Pharaoh even acknowledged that he had sinned; he faced the reality because of the pressure, but this did not save him. God did not create evil in Pharaoh; Pharaoh produced his own evil through his volition. However, God used Pharaoh's evil to evangelize the world. The divine plan in hardening Pharaoh's heart was threefold:

1. Liberation of the Jews from slavery, to form a client nation to God.
2. Evangelization of Egypt, Exo 7:3-5, *"But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh will not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt, and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst."*
3. Evangelization of the world, Exo 9:16, *"But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth."*

Paul compares the Jews of the First Advent and Church-age with Pharaoh, to demonstrate that their negative volition and hardness of heart exceeded even Pharaoh's, Rom 9-11.

The results and affects of scar tissue of the soul are as follows:

1. Stubbornness, Exo 4:21, *"And the Lord said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.'" "*
2. Selfishness, Deu 15:7, *"If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother."*
3. No respect for the Lord, Isa 63:17, *"Why, O Lord, dost Thou cause us to stray from Thy ways, and harden our heart from fearing Thee? Return for the sake of Thy servants, the tribes of Thy heritage."*
4. Self-destruction, Exo 14:8, *"And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly."*

5. Rebellion, 2Ch 36:13, *“And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear allegiance by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel.”*
6. Slander and speaking evil, Act 19:9, *“But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.”*
7. Lack of perceptive ability, 2Co 3:14, *“But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.”*
8. Arrogance, Neh 9:29, *“And admonished them in order to turn them back to Thy law. Yet they acted arrogantly and did not listen to Thy commandments but sinned against Thine ordinances, by which if a man observes them he shall live. And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not listen.”*
9. Refusal to receive correction, Jer 17:23, *“Yet they did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their necks in order not to listen or take correction.”*

THE HOLOCAUSTS

Romans 11:7-32

01/11/04

Scar tissue of the soul is a spiritual disorder, including the believer's involvement in the cosmic system, resulting in total loss of spiritual momentum and incurring the most intense discipline from God. Scar tissue of the soul can also be found in unbelievers, as in Rom 9:17, *"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.'" Pharaoh represented all the power, authority, and might of human rulership, but God demonstrated that all this did not even compare to His own power. Pharaoh set the mark for the worst hardness of the heart the world had ever seen, and he revealed it in the plagues of Egypt. In the first five plagues, Pharaoh continually hardened his own heart. God then permitted him to live for the next five plagues, and Pharaoh had many opportunities to change his mind, as stated in Exo 7:22, 8:15,32, 9:34-35. God used the hardness of Pharaoh's heart to evangelize the world, and this divine plan was threefold:*

1. Liberation of the Jews from slavery, to form a client nation to God.
2. Evangelization of Egypt, Exo 7:3-5.
3. Evangelization of the world, Exo 9:16.

Paul compares the Jews of the First Advent and Church-age with Pharaoh, to demonstrate that their negative volition and hardness of heart in Rom 9-11. In Joh 1:11, *"He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."* Just like God used the hardness of Pharaoh's heart to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world, God also used the hardness of the heart of His very own people to reveal the truth to others, as taught in detail by the Apostle Paul in Rom 11:7-32. He writes in Rom 11:30, *"For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience."*

Rom 9:17 gives us some insight into the subject of holocausts and why God allows tragedy to come upon His people. Here we see a reference to Pharaoh Thutmose III, who was Anti-Israel and evil to the core, yet the Lord said in effect, "I have caused you to continue in history." This should remind us that when we find ourselves in jeopardy, whether personal, national, or international, these things are permitted to continue in history so that the power of God may be demonstrated and that the grace and mercy of God may be manifested. From that manifestation of divine power comes two results:

1. The evangelism of the unbeliever.
2. The spiritual growth of the believer, and a wake-up call if necessary.

Throughout history God has demonstrated His power in an evil ruler or evil people, even believers who are negative toward doctrine, Psa 76:10, *"For the wrath of man shall praise Thee."* Through the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, God will demonstrate His power on such a scale that it will have a profound effect on two entire generations around the entire world. Paul continues in Rom 9:18, *"So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires."* The doctrine of *heathenism* teaches that if anyone in any part of the world, no matter how geographically isolated, at the point of *God consciousness* expresses in his soul a desire to know God, and a desire to have a relationship with God, then God will provide a way for that person to hear the truth. Pharaoh, in the 18th dynasty, controlled the Middle East and therefore a huge population. The hardness of his heart would be used by God to evangelize this entire geographical region. God can work in any situation, and nothing can stand in the way of His plan. Unfortunately, our human limitations constantly restrict our ability to know and understand God.

God can use any kind of people to accomplish His purpose, Pro 16:4, *"The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil."* The Lord will allow a wicked person in your life to treat you spitefully for the purpose of making you stronger spiritually. The Lord will

even use the wickedness of people and angels to bring His plan and purpose to pass, Job 21:30, *“For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity; they will be led forth at the day of fury.”* God used the self-righteousness of the Pharisees (Joh 8:1-11) and the evil and jealousy of Joseph’s brothers (Gen 50:20). The Lord will be glorified even when men perform their greatest possible evil, 2Co 13:8, *“For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.”*

God used the most powerful man in the world to evangelize the entire inhabited world, Rom 9:22, *“What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath as He did with the Egyptians and to make His power known [the plagues and the Red Sea incident], endured with much patience [giving Pharaoh opportunity after opportunity] vessels of wrath prepared for His glory.”* Many times we see tragedy and death, and do not see things that God sees. In reality, a crisis or a disaster could become the greatest blessing. The fact that the human race has continued to function for thousands of years is a remarkable testament to God’s faithfulness in protecting His creatures from their own self-destructive tendencies.

When Moses went to Egypt in order to secure the deliverance of the Exodus Jews from slavery, he had to perform 10 miracles. After leaving Egypt, the Israelites faced 10 tests, the tenth taking place at Kadesh-Barnea, where they gave in to their fear of the giants in the Promised Land, and were never able to enter it. Under the doctrine of numerology, the number 10 in the Word of God represents the perfection of the divine order. One of the interesting features of Hebrew and Greek is that in both written languages there are no numeric characters. In each language, the letters are also used as numbers, and each word has a numeric equivalent.

- 1 is the number of unity, Deu 6:4, Eph 4:5.
- 2 is the number of division. The Son has two natures, human and divine. There are two Testaments, the Old and New. There are two ages, this age and the age to come, Mat 12:32, 13:39-40,49; Mar 10:30.
- 3 is the number of divine perfection. The Trinity consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There are three qualities of the universe—time, space, and matter. Time is three-fold—past, present, and future, as is space—height, width, and depth. Matter is one, yet three—solid, liquid, and gas. Man is trichotomous—body, soul, and spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ is three Shepherds—the Good Shepherd, Joh 10:14-15 (in His death), the Great Shepherd, Heb 13:20 (in His resurrection), and the Chief Shepherd, 1Pe 5:4 (in His glory).
- 4 is the number of creation—four seasons and four geographical directions. The materials of the tabernacle were four, as were the coverings and the ornamentations.
- 5 is the number of grace. David picked up the fifth smooth stone to fight Goliath, 1Sa 17:40. The holy anointing oil was pure and composed of five parts, Exo 30:23-25.
- 6 is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day and labors six days. The sixth commandment is “Thou shalt not murder [kill another man].” The number of the Antichrist is 666.
- 7 is the number of spiritual perfection. There are seven days in a week, and there are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven parables in Matthew, and seven promises to the churches. There are seven “eternals” in Hebrews—a priest forever (1:6), eternal salvation (1:9), eternal judgment (6:2), eternal redemption (9:12), an eternal spirit (9:14), an eternal inheritance (9:15), and an everlasting covenant (13:20). There are the seven utterances of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.
- 8 is the number of new beginnings—eight people on Noah’s Ark, 2Pe 2:5, circumcision on the eighth day, Gen 17:12, and God’s eight covenants with Abraham.
- 9 is the number of judgment. There are nine Greek words derived from the root word for judgment.
- 10 represents the perfection of the divine order—the 10 commandments, the Tithes, the 10 plagues, the parable of the 10 virgins, the 10 “I am’s” of Christ, the 10 plagues in Egypt, the 10 miracles in the desert, and the 10 rebellions of the congregation of Israel, in which we see the full

extent of God's grace and mercy extended to them. God will go to the "tenth power" of His grace, in order to give every human being a chance, but in this case, the Jews blew their chance.

The 10 plagues were representative of the complete circle of God's judgments on Egypt (which is a type of the world). He gave the Jews 10 tests, and if they had passed any of them, they would have entered the Promised Land. This was followed by the 10 rebellions of Israel in the wilderness, which represented the completed series of Israel's perversities, and they will be wiped out at Kadesh-Barnea. The Lord gave them chance after chance to pass the tests until finally they reached the number of completion, where they totally rejected Him. When they reached the tenth and final test, they did not have the spiritual strength to go through a difficult situation. They had 10 chances, just as Pharaoh did.

Historical degeneracy persecutes the Jews' religious degeneracy in every generation of the Jewish age and Church-age. This is a historical trend of the Church-age and is a part of God's plan to preserve the nation of Israel so that they will not self-destruct. This principle is taught in Rev 17, especially verses 16-17. God uses evil to destroy evil, arrogance to destroy arrogance and degeneracy to destroy degeneracy. Evil is always a function of self-determination.

A great holocaust occurs in the last half of the Tribulation, when the beast (political and historical degeneracy) destroys the prostitute (religious degeneracy). The political degeneracy of the revived Roman Empire persecutes and destroys the religious degeneracy of Israel (the prostitute). In this holocaust, no human volition is violated and this dramatizes the fact that mankind is simply the product of his own volition. This is the first and most common cause of human suffering. Every human being must take the responsibility for his own decisions and actions. You can never solve your problems when you blame others for your unhappiness and suffering. You must take full responsibility yourself for your own wrong decisions related to your associations, activities, motives, and functions in life. We sin and get involved with evil because we want to and we choose to. Volition is the cause for sin, even in insanity, neurosis, psychosis, and sociopathic behavior.

All sins were judged at the Cross, yet all our sins have natural consequences in life, for which the individual must take full responsibility. We must associate consequences with our bad decisions, rather than blaming others. Most of our suffering is self-induced misery. Gal 6:7 states the law of volitional responsibility: *"Be not deceived; God cannot be mocked. Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."*

The book of Proverbs is a composition contrasting good and bad thoughts, motives, decisions, and actions. Proverbs teaches the believer how to live without learning the hard way. Most wrong decisions reflect indifference or negative volition toward Bible doctrine. Good decisions result from metabolized doctrine, called chakmah or "wisdom" (the equivalent of the Greek epignosis).

Bad decisions that cause self-induced misery are related to sins, and the seven worst sins are stated in Pro 6:16-19, *"There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are abominable to Him. Arrogant eyes [the system of thinking], a lying tongue [sins of the tongue], and hands that shed innocent blood [murder], a heart that devises thoughts [systems, plans] of evil [inordinate ambition and lust] and feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers [a troublemaker]."* Pro 13:20 says, *"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."*

The Jews suffered so much because of scar tissue in their soul and the hardness of their heart, Heb 3:7-13, *"Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they [the Jews] provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, And saw My works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways'; as I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long*

as it is still called 'Today,' lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Here the word sin is *hamartia*, and it means *failing to hit the mark*, whether it occurs by *omission* or *commission*, in thought, speech, or action. It means a violation of the divine law in thought or action. It means lightly esteeming the things of God.

Why the holocaust? Most of the Jews became very arrogant because of the blessing of God being upon them, and so they entered into passive arrogance. Passive arrogance unfortunately appears, usually after three or four generations of freedom and prosperity. Freedom and prosperity originates from a pivot of positive believers and the laws of divine establishment. Passive arrogance necessitates the action of active arrogance against it. God has ordained certain laws for the survival and freedom of the human race during the course of human history, to prevent human arrogance from getting completely out of control.

The laws of divine establishment are designed for and directed toward both believer and unbeliever.

1. Volition. Human volition must have freedom and privacy for proper function. Divine establishment provides freedom and privacy for those who do not violate criminal law. Criminals should have no freedom or privacy because they have forfeited that right.
2. Marriage. Monogamy, a permanent relationship between one man and one woman, is ordained of God, Gen 1:26-27, 2:18-25, 5:1-2; 1Co 7:2-4. Marriage is the most basic and fundamental organization in the human race. Even the unbeliever, whose life is ultimately a complete failure, can have great temporal happiness by marrying the right woman, Ecc 9:9.
3. Family. God has provided certain divine laws, such as the authority of parents, to protect, care, nourish, provide, train, and discipline children to prepare them for life. Parental authority is the means of preparing children for a normal life, Eph 6:1-4. Recognition of authority is essential to true prosperity and happiness. The highest expression of parental love is to inculcate principle through discipline. Children must be trained to respect the privacy, property, and rights of others, to not abuse freedom, and to respect authority.
4. Nationalism. If the entire human race ever came under one ruler prior to the Millennium, it would self-destruct. Internationalism is outlawed as evil by the Word of God. To perpetuate the human race and bring history to its ultimate conclusion, God has designed the nation to protect the freedom and rights of people on this earth. We call this nationalism. God promises a blessing upon the nations and people who honor these divine laws. Unfortunately, many become consumed with the blessings rather than the Blessor, and this is the basis for the development of passive arrogance.

Passive arrogance accepts freedom and prosperity apart from human virtue and any sense of responsibility. Its victims are spoiled and take everything for granted. Passive arrogance assumes one has a right to all the blessings without any responsibility and respect for divine establishment.

Passive arrogance on the part of the Jews of the dispersion (when they were scatted from their homeland) resulted in active arrogance on the part of their persecutors. However, because Jesus Christ controls history, no nation or race ever experiences a holocaust without the historical demand for it. Therefore, negative volition, apostasy, and passive arrogance or indifference create the vacuum that attracts the persecution of active arrogance, and therefore holocaust and historical disaster.

In the book of Revelation, Satan in his active arrogance, frustrated by his fall from heaven, is the instrument of punishment of the Jews in the second half of the Tribulation. Through cosmic involvement these Jews have entered into a state of passive arrogance, which always attracts the attack of active arrogance. The groups who practice anti-Semitism are characterized by active arrogance and evil, e.g., nation and states of Islam and Communism. This does not justify anti-Semitism, but explains its existence in terms of historical trends. The Jews who will be the victims of

Satan in the middle of the Tribulation are apostates who have developed passive arrogance through their residence and function in the cosmic system.

Evil demands evil, and cruelty demands cruelty, and therefore passive arrogance demands the function of active arrogance against it. Active arrogance punishes passive arrogance until those involved in active arrogance also becomes passive. A nation can be the instrument of punishment through active arrogance today, and tomorrow become the victim of holocaust after enjoying prosperity and falling into passive arrogance. This has always been the pattern of history and therefore part of the historical trend, which explains the Jewish holocausts and the rise and fall of nations and empires.

THE WINGS OF THE GREAT EAGLE

The Wings of the Great Eagle

Revelation 12:14

01/18/04

After studying the reasons for the Jewish holocausts, we now see the deliverance of born-again Jews in the first half of the Tribulation, Rev 12:14, *“And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman [the woman Israel, who was persecuted], in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.”*

This part of the Tribulation period is a time of great historical disaster. In historical disaster, most people assume that all opportunity is gone, but, for the believer, the opportunity and spiritual impact are even greater during these times. In difficult times we can reveal to others the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not need historical prosperity for Christian blessing. Our stability lies in the One who has everything under control, Isa 33:5-6, *“The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. And He shall be the stability of your times, a wealth of salvation or deliverance, a wealth of wisdom, and knowledge; respect for Jehovah is his treasure.”* No matter how great the disaster, whether it comes from war, famine, disease, economic depression, or social degeneration, it does not change God’s plan for your life. Nor do these problems hinder your opportunity for the fantastic blessing that is waiting for you in the predesigned plan of God.

The deliverance of true Israel at the end of the first half of the Tribulation is the subject of Rev 12:14, *“And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman...”* One interpretation of this verse is *escape by airplane* (citing Isa 40:31). Another interpretation is that the eagle is symbolic of *America*, which has protected Israel in the past. A third interpretation is that this is *angelic protection*.

1. Escape by airplane is ruled out on the basis of the rugged mountain terrain to which the Jews are fleeing, making airplane landings impossible. (This also does not line up with Mat 24:15-20.)
2. Protection from the USA is ruled out on the basis of the USA’s absence in prophecy. This makes for a popular message, and may get people interested, however, the Rapture precedes the Tribulation, which means many Americans are gone, and this is why the USA is not a significant force in the last days.
3. The idea of angelic protection is certainly compatible with the divine protection of true Israel throughout history. Elect angels have protected Jews many times. In this case, Michael, as the guardian of Israel, would be the great eagle. However, Michael is never described in this way.

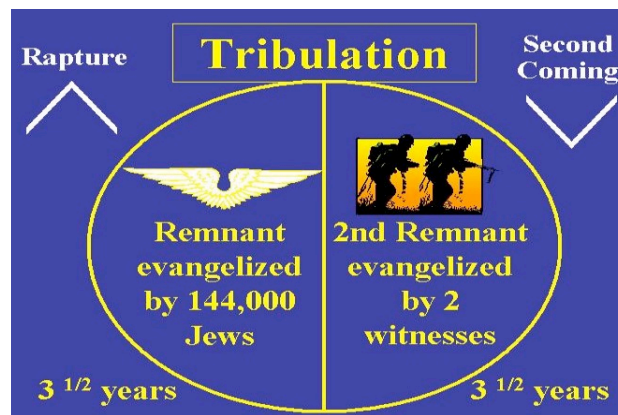
In Exo 19:4, God addressed Moses and Israel, and said: *“You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.”* The Jews were not literally picked up on eagles wings and carried to the Lord; this phrase is used *symbolically* for the Lord’s logistical grace protection of the Jews in their Exodus wanderings. “Eagles’ wings” represent systems of divine protection, as in Deu 32:9-12, *“For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of a wilderness; like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions. The Lord alone guided him, and there was no foreign god with him.”* God cared for the Jews, even when they did not care for Him. The spiritual training of Israel during those 40 years is likened to an eagle. Divine protection for true (regenerate) Israel in the first half of the Tribulation comes through the *spiritual training* given by God (as in Psa 144:1).

There will come a great evangelistic push after the Rapture, and 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Rev 7:4) will have a phenomenal response to the Gospel. Divine protection is administered through the content of the scriptures, as taught in Mat 24, beginning at verse 15, *“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation [detestable idol]...”* This is the image of the dictator of the revived Roman

Empire in the Tribulation, who is also the leader of the ecumenical religion. In the middle of the Tribulation, Israel is in serious trouble, surrounded by enemies—the king of the North, which today would be comparable to modern-day Russia, and the king of the East, comparable to China (the Asiatic Communist block), as well as the historical antagonism of the Arabs, called the King of the South.

Mat 24:16 continues, *“Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains [the high desert country]...”* The high desert country of Rev 12:6 is called Edom, Moab, and Ammon in Dan 11:41, revealing the exact location. Mat 24:20 indicates how swift this attack will be: *“Let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house, and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.”* This is where the eagle picks up the Jews, as it were; the protection of God is given through divine commands that must be followed in order for the believer to be protected. In Rev 12:14, the two wings of the great eagle represent the word of God, which is alive and powerful. The strength and vigor given to the believer who walks with the Lord is compared to that of the eagle. The believer is therefore able to rise above his surroundings and circumstances, Isa 40:31, *“Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”* Under this figure, the Lord describes the ease and joy with which Christians rise out of their distresses and are set free from their surroundings when they look to the Lord for His blessing.

There are two distinct periods of 3½ years each in the Tribulation, and also two distinct categories of Jewish believers. In the first half of the Tribulation, their orders are to flee. This first group (evangelized by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists) is given the two wings of the great eagle to flee to the high desert country (divine protection). The second group (evangelized in the second half of the Tribulation by the two witnesses, probably Moses and Elijah) is commanded to fight, and they will go to battle in the final stage of the Armageddon campaign at the siege of Jerusalem. They rely on a different promise (Zec 14:1-4); the Lord will fight for them. These Jews must understand doctrinal eschatology and the times in which they live. (Any Jewish believers who decide to stand and fight in the first half of the Tribulation will be wiped out.)



The original Greek gives us some great insight in Rev 12:14, *“And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman.”* The Greek verb translated “were given” is the *aorist passive indicative* form of the verb *didomi*, and, as always, anything given by God is always a matter of grace; it is not earned or deserved, and therefore this is *logistical grace provision*. Notice that this verb of grace is in the *passive* voice, which means that regenerate Israel receives the action; they are *being protected*, and they cannot protect themselves. The declarative (indicative) mood represents the action as fact and as reality; and the reality is, for the positive believer in time of historical disaster, he is not in any

way deterred from the blessings that belong to him in the midst of adversity. God's plan continues with the same blessings and promotions in historical adversity as in historical prosperity.

"And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman." The dative singular indirect object from the Greek noun *gunaika*, is translated "the woman," referring to Israel, specifically regenerate Israel in the first half of the Tribulation. The advantages of being a believer are great in time of historical adversity, as well as in time of historical prosperity—we can take hold of eternal life in time, Gal 6:8, 1Ti 6:6-12, Phi 3:10-11. The next phrase in Rev 12:14 reads, *"In order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place."* The Greek verb for "fly" is the present middle subjunctive form of the verb *petomai*, which means to fly or to soar above, and emphasizes the assurance of deliverance to those who simply follow instructions. Those who follow Bible doctrine never lose. To the world, they may appear to have lost, on the surface, and they may even lose things for the sake following the Lord Jesus Christ, but they never lose out in the plan of God.

"In order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place." The place of refuge is described three times in eschatological passages. What is this place of deliverance for the Jewish believers in Palestine in the first half of the Tribulation?... It is described in Dan 11:31 as the land of Edom, Moab and Ammon (the high desert country), in Mat 24:16 as the mountains, and, in Rev 12:6 as the high desert country. The adverb of place, *hopou*, is translated "where," and it emphasizes the fact that there is only one place to be in the plan of God—the right place to be at the right time, and you arrive there by the using the Bible doctrine you have previously been given by God. God has never left any generation of believers without a place of refuge, without protection. We are all products of our own decisions (not our circumstances), and for the Jews to stray from this place is to be destroyed.

The next phrase in Rev 12:14 is very comforting: *"Where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."* The verb translated "nourished" is the *present passive indicative* form of the *trepho*, which means to be sustained. The passive voice shows that these Jews receive the action of the verb in the form of logistical grace provision. The title "the serpent" is used here instead of Satan or Devil because Satan is trying to lure the born-again Jews away from their place of refuge. They are safe as long as they stay in their place of refuge, and they must know and follow passages like Mat 24:21-30, so that they can exercise the faith-rest drill and rely on God's protection. Just as the serpent tempted the woman in the garden, so the serpent will tempt the woman Israel in the place of refuge.

Mat 24:15-31 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [let the reader understand [let the doctrinal believer make application]], then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains [the high desert country]; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a great Tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world, until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. [Satan knows the Jews are safe, and that he must entice them out of their place of refuge. They will be tested, and they must be able to refuse to believe what sounds very appealing.] Behold, I have told you in advance or I have communicated in advance. If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms [back in Jerusalem], do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." [Now matter how isolated, every human being on earth will know when the Second Advent occurs in Jerusalem.] Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

But immediately after the Tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken [there will be a blackout throughout the entire world, described in Joe 2:10,30-31; Luk 21:25-27; Isa 13:9-10, Zec 14:6], and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. [There will be signs seen and heard all over the world, and the Jews must wait for these signs, rather than fall for deceptive the rumors that the Messiah has returned.]”

Satan, the serpent, will do everything he can to draw out the Jews so that he can destroy them. He will employ all his powers of deception to do so.

Each of Satan’s titles denotes a particular function in his plan and policy of evil. The title “Satan” (Hebrew *Satan*, Greek *Satanas*) emphasizes his role in the angelic conflict; it means an adversary, one who withstands, an opponent, and a prosecutor, 1Ch 21:1, Job 1:6-12, 2:1-5; Zec 3:1. “Devil” (Greek *diabolos*) emphasizes his slander and false accusations as the malignant enemy of God and the Messiah, Joh 8:44. “Dragon” (Greek *drakon*) speaks of his function as a vicious destroyer, Rev 12:4,7,9. The word for “serpent” (as in Rev 12:14) is *ophis*, derived from the hiss of the serpent, as it slithered out of its hole. This title carries the idea of being sly, deceitful, and sneaky.

God addresses Satan in Isa 14:12 as “*O star of the morning, son of the dawn!*” The word for “star” is *heylel* (often translated “Lucifer”), and it means “shining one” or “star.” The Latin translation “Lucifer” means “light bearer.” Satan is the shining one, the translucent one, and the simulating one—he is the greatest creature personality of all time. In the Hebrew Old Testament, two creatures are said to radiate light, making them extremely attractive—*heylel* (Satan in Isa 14:12) and *nachash* (the serpent in Gen 3). Satan and the serpent are both *shining ones*. Satan was attractive to at least one third of all the angels, and the serpent was attractive to the woman. Satan and his servants appear as an “angel of light,” 2Co 11:14-15, with a counterfeit Jesus, a counterfeit gospel, and a counterfeit spirit.

Rev 12:14 (corrected translation) Nevertheless, the two wings of the great eagle [the divine protection of true Israel as in Exo 19:4, Deu 32:9-12] were given to the woman [logistical grace provision for a regenerate Israel in the first half of the Tribulation], so that she [true Israel] might fly to her place of refuge [Edom, Moab, and Ammon, according to Dan 11:41, the mountains, according to Mat 24:16, or the high desert country, according to Rev 12:6; all synonymous descriptions], where in that place, she [regenerate Israel] will be sustained for a time [one year], plus times [two years], plus one half time [3½ years total] from the presence of the serpent [Satan].

THE EARTH AND THE FLOOD

Divine Protection in Historical Disaster

Revelation 12:15-16

01/25/04

Revelation 12:14 Nevertheless, the two wings of the great eagle [divine protection for true Israel] were given to the woman, so that she [true Israel] might fly to her place of refuge [the mountains (Mat 24:16) of Edom, Moab, and Ammon], where in that place [the place of refuge provided by God], she will be sustained three and a half years from the presence of the serpent.

Here we see Satan the “serpent,” the deceiver, attempting to lure the born-again Jews from their place of refuge.

We now move on to the first attack of the *third demon assault army* in Rev 12:15, “*And the serpent poured water like a violent flood out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.*” The first demon assault army is mentioned in Rev 9:3, “*And out of the smoke locusts [the first demon army from the Abyss where they had been imprisoned] invaded the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.*” In Rev 9:13-14, we have the attack of the second demon assault army in the Tribulation period, “*And the sixth angel sounded [a winner angel from the prehistoric angelic conflict], and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, one commanding the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels [the demon army commanders] who have been imprisoned at the great river Euphrates.’*” In Rev 9:15-16 we see their intent and their numbers: “*And the four angels [the demon generals commanding this second assault army group], who had been kept in state of readiness for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind. And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.*”

In Rev 12:15, “serpent” is the title of Satan based on his tactical victory in regaining rulership of this world, when he tempted the woman in the Garden, and in this verse he “*poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman [Israel].*” “Water” is used here as in Isa 8:7-8, to represent a flood, an invading army, or a disaster. Believers must always remember that the Lord Jesus Christ controls history, Psa 29:10, “*The Lord sits as King at the flood; yes, the Lord sits as King forever.*” The Psalmist wrote in Psa 32:6, “*Therefore, let everyone who is spiritual pray to Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not reach him.*” In Rev 12:15, “water” refers to the third demon assault army, which has already been defeated in the battle of heaven, and is now taking out its frustration on the human race.

In Rev 12:15 the word for “river” is the Greek noun *potamos*, which means a river moving with a “tearing” speed, therefore it is used in the noun form for water rushing rapidly; it is used in the *Attic* (classical) *Greek* as an analogy for violence or sudden disaster. The “woman” is Israel, and the phrase “after the woman” is an idiom meaning “overtaking the woman.” The portion of Israel destroyed in this holocaust is the unbelieving Jews, but the born-again Jews who follow the instructions of Mat 24 are safe. The third demon assault army is portrayed as attacking a helpless person who is about to be overtaken in the rapids and drowned; this demon army is likened to a wall of water or flood. In this analogy Israel is helpless apart from divine intervention. However, God keeps His word, and there will be Jewish believers preserved alive who will receive the promises of the unconditional covenants at the Second Advent.

While Satan seeks to destroy all Jews in this great attack by the third demon assault army, the evangelizing of Jews will still take place. Those who respond to the word of God and grow in grace, and live in the faith-rest drill, will survive and will advance to spiritual maturity in times of historical disaster. And not only will they survive, but they will also have fantastic blessings. There has never

been a disaster in history without survivors. Survival depends on having great flexibility, and having already developed the habit of making good decisions from the application of doctrine. When personal or historical disaster hits, you must always be flexible. This requires the ability to think and to improvise, and it means the absence of fear, because fear is inability to think under pressure. It begins with the confidence that God has a plan for your life, and as long as you are alive, it is not too late. God has a purpose for your life, and you must learn to respond and adapt in whatever situation God has placed you. This is how you handle the storms of life; He is at your side and you will never be lost, Joh 18:9, *"That the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, 'Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one.'"*

The more doctrine you learn, the greater your ability will be to change to handle situations as they arise, even though it is not what you desire for your life. The grace of God always meets the flexibility of believers who apply doctrine in adverse conditions. While the believer's flexibility is manifesting itself in the application of doctrine, the grace of God is always providing the means of escape. In God's way of escape, there are certain decisions you must be willing to make, instead of being arrogant and stubborn, and therefore inflexible, as we see in the divine instructions in Mat 24, such as "Don't come down from the rooftop to get your things," and "Don't even turn back to get your cloak." Flexibility is required for obedience.

Historical peril and dangers do not take away the volitional choices of the Jews, who are the targets of this demonic attack. God has a greater purpose and His purpose will be accomplished, and the Jews who do not survive are simply those who rejected the doctrine, and therefore did not have the preparation and grace orientation to make the right choice when the time came. You must be able to enjoy what you have, but also be able to walk away from it at any time that becomes necessary. Paul stated this same principle in Phi 4:11-13; he knew how to live when "having abundance and suffering need"; he had learned how to handle every situation. The flexibility he had developed in his life is revealed in the great statement, *"I can do all things through Him who keeps on pouring the power into me."* The power, of course, is Bible doctrine and the ability to apply it to his life. He had lived in prosperous situations, and he had lived in adverse situations, and he could handle them all. He was a survivor until God called him home according to His divine will.

In Rev 12:15, Satan's goal is to leave no Jew alive by the time of the return of Jesus Christ, so that God will not be able to keep his promises: "And the serpent poured water like a violent flood out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood." The Greek verb *poieo*, which means to be "swept away" is in the *aorist active subjunctive* form, and therefore means to do, to make, to manufacture, or to cause. This verb is in the *causative* active voice, indicating that Satan, as the subject, performs the action of the verb through intermediary means. Satan always uses an agent, a "middleman." This is why the Bible teaches that we must know our enemy.

- He used the serpent as an intermediary agent to get to the woman in the Garden, and then he used the woman to get to the man, Gen 6:1-5.
- He used Cain to kill a godly man, namely his brother Abel, Gen 4:8, Joh 3:11-15.
- He used fear to get Abraham to lie about his wife, Gen 12:13.
- He used love and sex to get to Samson, who had a lust for prostitutes.
- He used boredom to get David to sin with Bathsheba when he should have been at work leading the Israeli army to victory, 2Sa 11:1.
- He used a lust for an excessive luxurious lifestyle against Solomon, 1Ki 4:22-23.
- He used Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to attack Moses and try to discredit his authority. Be careful of those who reject authority and attack it and speak lightly of it.
- He used a love for money to entice Balaam to curse the Jews, Deu 23.
- For money, Ananias and Sapphira became the first recorded hypocrites in the Church, and God executed them as a testimony against their deceit.

- For money Judas betrayed Jesus.

Satan is always looking for an intermediary agent to do his dirty work. That is why you are to guard your tongue, Jam 3:2-10. We must be careful to recognize the agent Satan uses against us. It could be a bad marriage, a romantic relationship, fear, worry, doubt, jealousy, alcohol, drugs, sex, or a lust for authority and power, among many others.

In Rev 12:15, the objective of Satan then is twofold:

1. To attack Israel to the point where she has lost control of her own destiny—like one helplessly swept away in a flood and drowned (a perfect analogy in Rev 12:15).
2. To ultimately destroy Israel completely, so that she has no future, therefore frustrating the plan of God.

From the time of Abraham to the present and continuing into the Tribulation and up to the Second Advent, Satan has always been and will always be the enemy of Israel. Only those Jews who have believed in Christ and learned Bible doctrine will have a personal sense of destiny in this crisis. They will maintain control of their lives, continue to make decisions from a position of strength, and survive. The Jews who have believed in Christ and who advance to maturity are alive in the midst of the flood, and they can see the whole picture. Israel can only have a personal sense of destiny through the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of Israel. Those who reject Him will flounder in these terrible attacks from Satan, which we know as the “holocausts.”

To be a racial Jew does not provide a personal sense of destiny. To be a racial Jew and to reject Jesus Christ as Savior substitutes arrogance for a personal sense of destiny. Arrogance destroys one’s true personal sense of destiny, and, even worse, gives him a false personal sense of destiny. Apart from faith in Jesus Christ and His saving work, no one can have a personal sense of destiny, for the plan of God begins at the Cross. Therefore being a racial Jew does not equal being a true (regenerate) Jew, until one is born again by faith in Jesus Christ. True Israel is regenerate Israel, and only true Israel will not lose its sense of destiny, which means that many Jewish unbelievers are going to die in this great Tribulational holocaust.

Rev 12:15-16 And the serpent projected from his mouth water [great adversity] like a violent flood [the third demon assault army] after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

In verse 16, we begin to see the divine deliverance of Israel. No matter how great the historical disaster, God always delivers winner believers. Winners have their “survival kit” built up and constructed in their soul through the perception of Bible doctrine, and with it they have the innate ability to be flexible in every circumstance of disaster. Rev 12:16 is a continuation of the analogy, and it is now an analogy of deliverance. The “earth” in this verse refers to the divine protection of the Jews in the land of Edom, Moab, and Ammon of Dan 11:41, the mountains of Mat 24:16, and the high desert country of Rev 12:14. This is the area designated for their safety. This is the place of refuge God has provided for the Jewish believers converted by the 144,000 evangelists in the first half of the Tribulation.

God always provides a place for divine solutions and a plan for His people. In the analogy of Rev 12:16, the landmass (the earth) is greater than the flood, and this becomes a picture of divine deliverance of Israel, during the greatest holocaust of their history. In this analogy, the landmass protects from the waters. The land can be interpreted both literally and figuratively, and communicates the concept of God’s faithfulness to Israel, and their deliverance from the flood waters of anti-Semitism, in the future as well as now.

Rev 12:16 And the land [which means safety from water for regenerate Israel of the first half of the Tribulation] helped the woman...

The verb *boetheo* is in the aorist active indicative form, and it means to help or provide aid. There is more divine power (the landmass) than disaster (the water). In this passage, the interpretation deals with a future time, the middle of the Tribulation; however, it has an application for us today. When you have tried everything to find a way of escape in time of disaster, you must remember that God has a plan for your life, and that plan includes being in the right place at the right time.

In the worst historical disasters that history has ever known, we still can go back to the principle that God has a plan for your life. According to His plan and His purpose, He will deliver you in time of historical disaster, provided, of course, that the disaster is not intended for your discipline. Your deliverance from historical disaster inevitably comes from your perception of Bible doctrine. Your willingness to look at life from the divine viewpoint makes it possible for you to be delivered. Deliverance takes place in the soul for those who are in the plan of God, and if God is not using disaster to punish you, he is using it to demonstrate His power, His grace, and His deliverance. Above all, it is to orient us to the grace of God. It is very easy for us to forget the grace of God as soon as we experience any prosperity and blessing, and we take our eyes off the source of our blessing.

Rev 12:16 And the land helped the woman [the nation of Israel], and the land opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

The analogy to water in the form of flooding represents the tremendous power of Satan and the attack of his demon assault army; the land represents the greater power of God crushing the power of the kingdom of darkness.

NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE HISTORICAL DISASTER, BIBLE DOCTRINE IS GREATER.

Revelation 12:17-13:1

02/01/04

We are now ready to complete Rev 12 and our series on the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Rev 12:15-17 And the serpent projected from his mouth, water like a violent flood [the third demon assault army], after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. And the land [safety from the "water" for regenerate Israel in the first half of the Tribulation] helped the woman [Israel], and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. [This results in a second attack against the born-again Jews in the following verse.] And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

The reason anti-Semitism exists which is because Satan and the kingdom of darkness are desperately trying to destroy Israel. The phrase in Rev 12:17, "and the dragon was enraged," is a very simplistic but profound statement. Wherever there is frustration and anger, arrogance intensifies. The verb used here is the aorist passive indicative form of *orgizo*, and it refers to rage and anger. The most dangerous people in the world are those whose arrogance has been cornered and put down. People who are cowardly, weak, and unstable can be like a wild animal once you get them in a corner, because their arrogance has been frustrated. They are then capable of things they would normally never do.

Frustrated arrogance is the motivation for many of the evils in the world; this not just sin, but sin that culminates in a form of evil. Satan now has intense anger, resentment, animosity, and wrathful indignation, and he is throwing an angelic tantrum. Satan is the greatest creature that ever came from the hand of God, yet he is still a failure. You can have every talent, every ability, and every type of mentality and beauty that is desirable among human creatures and still never succeed, because of arrogance. Satan is infuriated because he was frustrated in his endeavor to destroy Israel, Rev 12:17, "And the dragon was enraged with [epi] the woman [gune]." When the arrogant individual attacks another person and does not succeed in his attack, he then becomes perpetually resentful toward that person.

Frustrated arrogance produces anger and rage, which in turn becomes the motivation for evil and revenge. Revenge is often motivated by frustrated arrogance, when the arrogant person is rejected by another. Satan failed, and now he hates the Jew and he blames the Jew for all of his problems. Having failed in his first attack, he is going to continue to attack as long as he lives, Rev 12:17, "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring." Satan will not take the responsibility for his own decisions, and once you fall into a state frustrated of arrogance you are in for a lifetime of vengeful activity, a life of self-induced and self-perpetuated misery. When people become petty and vindictive, they become conspiratorial in their animosity toward others. Many believers have spent almost their entire life in the cosmic system under demon influence, totally miserable, never finding the answer or solution to anything. In Rev 12:17, the aorist active infinitive form of *poieo* (translated "to make"), means to produce or to make, and here Satan "went off to make war," to cause trouble, hostility, and conflict. However, while the demon assault army destroys, a great many Jews, but they will not destroy the remnant, the believers advancing to maturity.

In Rev 12:17, "the rest of her offspring" are the Jews who survived the initial holocaust of the Tribulation. The Greek noun *loipos* means remnant or survivors, referring to Jewish believers who

have followed God's commands. In the baptism of fire, at the end of the Tribulation, Jewish unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire forever, Isa 1:25-27; Eze 20:34-38; Mal 3:1-6, 4:1-2. The baptism of fire is the judgment of the Tribulational unbelievers at the Second Advent. Both Jews and Gentiles who are Tribulational unbelievers come under this Second Advent judgment. This judgment results in the Millennium beginning with believers only, Mat 3:11-12, Luk 3:16.

We see the baptism of fire taking place at the Second Advent in 2Th 1:7-9 and Mat 3:11-12, *"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* The analogy to the baptism of fire is found in Mat 24:36-41, where the one left in the field is the believer, and the one taken is the unbeliever: *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left."* The Second Advent is compared to the days of Noah when people gave no time to Bible doctrine because they were too distracted by the pleasures of life.

Our Lord taught several important parables dealing with the Baptism of Fire:

- The wheat and the tares, Mat 13:24-30,36-40, *Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age."*
- The good and bad fish, Mat 13:47-50, *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*
- The ten virgins, Mat 25:1-13, *"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour."*
- The sheep and the goats, Mat 25:31-46, *"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered*

before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' [The Lord then goes on to describe the works of the sheep compared to the works of the goats.]

- The talent test (where the man with one talent represents the unbeliever), Mat 25:14-30, "For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The baptism of fire is necessary for the beginning of a new civilization in the Millennium. In each civilization throughout the Word of God man has a different life span, and each has its own climate and variation in species. All civilizations begin with believers only. Civilization is part of the divine protection of the human race during the angelic conflict. The four distinct civilizations in human history are (1) antediluvian, (2) postdiluvian, (3) the Millennium, and (4) eternity.

Rev 12:15-17 And the serpent projected from his mouth, water like a violent flood [the third demon assault army], after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. And the land [safety from the "water" for regenerate Israel in the first half of the Tribulation] helped the woman [the nation of Israel], and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

The target of the Satanic holocaust in the last 3½ years is described by the phrase, "who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." They survive, not just because they were in some safe place, but rather because they had doctrine resident in their souls and they were flexible whenever necessary. You can be in the right place at the right time, with the right people, and still freak out under pressure because you do not have doctrine in your *own* soul; this is why you must be spiritually self-sustained.

These faithful Jewish believers "keep the commandments of God." The present active participle form of the verb *tereo* ("keep") means to guard, protect, and observe. The accusative plural direct object from the noun *entole* is translated "commandments," and refers to the mandates of doctrine, the precepts of God, or the divine prescriptions. These commandments are not the Mosaic Law; they are divine commands that include the whole realm of doctrine, which require the application of doctrine that has already been learned. Rev 12:17 goes on to say that they "hold to the testimony of Jesus." The word for "testimony" is the accusative singular direct object of *marturia*, which has to do with the testimony of their life, as well as their lips.

Rev 12 is a great example of the dynamics of doctrine in historical disaster:

1. Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the mentality of the soul is the greatest power in life. This is why doctrine itself is speaking in Pro 8:14, "*Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine;*" and Pro 24:5-6, "*A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledge increases power. For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors [doctrines counseling the believer] there is victory.*" No matter how great the historical disaster, Bible doctrine is greater. This means that your mind must be controlled by Bible doctrine to make significant decisions for freedom, glorification of the Lord, and advance to maturity.
2. So it is with these Jewish believers who are delivered in the last half of the Tribulation; through perception and application of doctrine they obey the mandates of God. They are the ones who are attracting persecution from Satan, because of their active testimony for the Lord.

3. Through perception and application of doctrine they keep on having a witness, or testimony, for our Lord Jesus Christ before man, but most of all before God.
4. While Satan is a genius and the ruler of this world, he cannot contend with the active power of Bible doctrine perceived and applied in his own domain, the world.
5. Doctrine is useless unless it is loaded into the right lobe of the soul; it is only this *epignosis* doctrine that can be applied. Man is inferior to angels by creation, but through a regeneration and perception of doctrine man is able to contend with the fallen angels and their attacks on the human race. Believers in the Tribulation will face both angelic attacks and demonic attacks; one is visible, the other is invisible.

Rev 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Rev 13:1 And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

This paragraph describing Satan and his actions in Rev 12:17 is continued in the next verse, Rev 13:1, with the phrase, “And he stood on the sand of the seashore.” (There are no chapter breaks in the original language, and this phrase should actually be in Rev 12:17.) We must be careful to keep these things in their proper context, and to get the complete picture of how Satan is functioning, we must look at the entire paragraph, Rev 12:17-13:1a, “*And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the seashore.*” The verb for “stood” is the aorist passive indicative form of *histemi*, which means to take a stand or to oppose.

- The sand of the sea refers to the two dictators in chapter 13 who serve Satan during the last half of the Tribulation, the time of the devil’s desperation.
- The sea refers to the sea of nations during the last half of the Tribulation.
- The seashore refers to Satan’s confinement to the earth during the period of his desperation. This verse is the transition into the eschatology of the devil’s desperation, which continues through chapter 20, where we read in verses 1-3, “*And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed.*”

This is the story of the last half of the Tribulation. Satan takes a stand on the earth, because he has no place else to go. He is thrown out of heaven, and he will eventually end up in Hades, but at this time he is stuck on the earth for the first time since the creation of the human race. Satan has lived in heaven during the entire prehistoric angelic conflict and human history. In this present day, Satan still lives in heaven, and he only “commutes” to earth, of which he is the ruler.

Satan’s bad decisions have limited his options, and the same is true about all of us. Bad decisions resulted in his being thrown out of heaven forever in the middle of the Tribulation. It is inevitable, in our time on earth that all our bad decisions will have painful repercussions apart from the overruling grace of God, which does occur under certain conditions of rebound and continued residence in the predesigned plan of God.

How can this happen to creatures who once had the knowledge of truth, believed it and even lived in it? It all begins with one sin that we all have in common, in some measure—arrogance. So many believers reach a point where, for whatever reason, they think that they have “arrived” and that they have all the answers. Therefore, they make stupid decisions from a position of weakness, which is arrogance. Bad decisions from a position of weakness result in the demotion of Satan as the ruler of

this world and his incarceration for 1,000 years in the abyss. These same bad decisions cause Satan, on his release from prison, to return to the earth to instigate a final conspiracy, which terminates in the Gog Revolution and Satan spending eternity in the lake of fire.

Fortunately, God in His grace has provided the power of Bible doctrine to his people, so that they can overcome any circumstances of life, even the Satanic attacks of the Tribulation.

THE THIRD WITNESS IN THE CHURCH AGE

Ephesians 5:31-32

02/08/04

We have completed our study on the Israeli-Arab Conflict, and we are ready to return to our study of *Philippians*. We have begun to note that whenever a believer begins to attain any success in the spiritual realm, an attack will be made against him to stop his momentum in the plan of God. Once the serious student of the word of God (the believer who wants to have an impact in the spiritual realm) recognizes this, he will see the importance of God's Word concerning relationships. This includes relationships between friends, fellow believers, members of the congregation, right man and right woman, and husbands and wives. One of the most subjective and sensitive areas of life is the relationship between a man and a woman, unless, of course, we see it from the divine viewpoint.

We have now resumed our study at the point that we left off, nearly 2½ years ago—the “mystery” in Eph 5:32, a mystery that has been overlooked and ignored by most preachers. After Paul describes the guidelines for marriage, he says in Eph 5:32, *“This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”* The mystery spoken of here cannot be the institution of marriage, because marriage has existed since the beginning of the human race. It also cannot refer to the Lord as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride, because the same analogy is used in the Old Testament for the Lord and Israel.

So, then what is the “mystery”? This mystery goes back to the Garden of Eden and what the first Adam lost in the fall and what the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, restored, and how it relates to the angelic conflict. One of the many blessings that we have because of the Cross is that our Lord not only restored all that Adam lost, but He enhanced it and built upon it. We can understand and experience a measure of these principles in the spiritual realm now; however, we will abide in them and experience them in totality in the eternal state.

<u>Creation / the Garden</u>	<u>Time / the Church-age</u>	<u>Eternity / Heaven</u>
Adam had perfect righteousness. Perfect environment. Original design of marriage.	Believer receives perfect righteousness. Predesigned plan of God. Insertion of Christian marriage.	Perfect righteousness reigns forever. Perfect environment forever. Perfect marriage of Christ and His Bride.

The mystery of Eph 5:32 goes back to the Garden of Eden:

- The absolute righteousness that the first Adam lost is now duplicated and imputed in the spiritual realm to the believer in the Church-age, who receives a double righteousness (under the principle of the “double portion”) and will remain in that state of perfection forever, Rev 22:11.
- The perfect environment in the Garden of Eden that the first Adam lost is now duplicated in the spiritual realm in the predesigned plan of God for the Church-age, and will be consummated in the eternal state with perfect environment for all eternity, Rev 21:1-4.

- The original design of marriage that the first Adam lost can now be experienced in the spiritual realm for two believers in the Church-age, and becomes analogous to the eternal marriage between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bride for all eternity, Rev 21:9. This is the mystery of Eph 5:32.

This correlates well with the passage where we left off in Philippians, Phi 4:7, which says, *“In fact, that spiritual peace and prosperity from the source of the God, which surpasses or rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts [right lobes], also your motivation [minds] in Christ Jesus.”* God the Holy Spirit has illustrated this principle with one of the most sensitive areas of human relationships, which is marriage.

Satan and all his fallen angels realize how Christian marriage glorifies God, and they have done a masterful job of destroying the institution of marriage and blinding the human race from its true meaning. They have succeeded to the point that the average believer disregards or rejects the biblical information concerning this subject. Solomon said in Pro 24:5, *“A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledge increases power.”* The necessary spiritual information is all we need to combat any difficult situation. This “spiritual intelligence,” which was once “classified information,” concealed and restricted from both angels and mankind, is revealed in the Church-age as the *mystery*; it has been “declassified.” It is only a secret to those who are willfully ignorant. If a believer desires to know the truth, it will be revealed, Joh 7:17, Jer 29:13.

Concerning mystery doctrine in the Church-age, Rom 16:25-26 says, *“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.”* The “revelation of the mystery” has now been manifested by the Scriptures, and the pastor-teachers of the Church-age are called stewards, or dispensers of that mystery, 1Co 4:1.

In the book of Philippians we have seen the connection between the maximum glorification of God for which believers are created, the resolution of a prehistoric angelic conflict, and receiving the highest and best from God (the hidden assets of Eph 1:14). The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is guarding something for us that is currently “on deposit” in Eph 1:3 and 1Pe 1:4—phenomenal wealth for the soul of the believer throughout time and eternity. The born-again believer in the Church-age who reaches spiritual maturity and then passes the most serious undeserved suffering and evidence testing is the one who will receive fantastic blessings in time and greater blessings in the eternal state, to the glory of God. He becomes an invisible hero and receives the highest and best from God, beginning now, in time (Mar 10:30). Those blessings are so monumental that they cannot be contained, and they “overflow” beyond the believer himself, as in Mal 3:10. This blessing overflows to those in his periphery—family, community, nation, and even the entire generation.

As born again believers in Jesus Christ, we have the capacity in our local assembly, our marriage, our family, and our job to have a fantastic impact. We have the most phenomenal and magnificent *privilege, potential, and opportunity*. The unique spiritual life that was pioneered by our Lord Jesus Christ has been passed on to us. It all begins with *motivation* and the reason why we are here. And why are we here?...

Rev 4:11 “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.”

Isa 43:7 “Everyone who is called by My name, I have created for My glory, the ones whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”

Isa 43:21 “The people whom I formed for Myself, will declare My praise.”

Joh 15:8 “By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

You have been created to glorify God in the appeal trial of Satan and the angelic conflict. The formal trial, Satan's presentation of his appeal, was held between the creation of the first Adam and the incarnation of the Last Adam. Between Gen 2:7 (the creation of the first Adam) and Mat 1:25 (the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ) was the presentation of the formal trial.

The first Adam fell, but the Last Adam would come on the scene, strategically resolve the angelic conflict, and share that victory with winner believers throughout the ages. In the dispensations of the hypostatic union and the Church-age, the prosecution presents its answer to Satan's appeal; this is the rebuttal phase of the trial. (There will be a third and final phase of the trial—the closing arguments and summary of the prosecution, which includes the Second Advent and the Millennial rule of Christ.) This rebuttal phase involves several witnesses, three specifically (although only two were required under Jewish jurisprudence). The Lord Jesus Christ was the first witness; He is the star witness and the "faithful witness," Rev 1:5, 3:14, 22:16. Any believer who becomes an invisible hero of the Church-age testifies as the second witness. The third and final witness belongs to two believers in Christian marriage.

The standards and the values of Christian marriage, as outlined in Eph 5:22-33, are higher than any standards that have ever been given to mankind, and can only be fulfilled through the spiritual life. There are two major problems that exist between the man and the woman. The predominant problem with the woman toward the man is lack of respect; therefore, we are given passages such as Eph 5:22-24, "*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*" The man's predominant problem is bitterness and hypersensitivity, Col 3:19, "*Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter against them*"; Eph 5:25, "*Husbands, love your wives [how?], just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*" How did Christ love the Church? He loved her with an impersonal unconditional love (a non-aggressive, passive love), and He gave Himself up for her. Therefore, how should a husband love his wife? ...Eph 5:28-29, "*So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies [themselves]. He who loves his own wife loves himself [spiritual self-esteem]; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.*" The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and also love her as himself. As a man of God, he needs confidence and spiritual self-esteem. When a married couple fulfills the spiritual life corporately, their marriage becomes a corporate, or collective, witness for the prosecution of Satan, and that marriage receives the very highest and best from God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the "bright morning star," and invisible heroes of the Church-age receive the order of the morning star in Rev 2:28. Satan saw Jesus Christ, the star witness against him, as a target for destruction, even before His birth. His attacks can be traced all the way back to Gen 4, in the murder of Abel, and Gen 6, when he attempted to destroy the line of true humanity with angelic genetic infiltration. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself became the star witness in His hypostatic union, and He is followed by individual witnesses of the Church-age, who make up the second witness against Satan. Finally, the third witness is the corporate witness, Christian marriage in the Church-age only.

Gen 2:18-24 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. [Why? Because it was clear to Adam that he was a higher creation than the animal kingdom, therefore God gave him a helper (ezer, which means a

responder and fulfiller).] So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. [From this rib is going to come a lot of man's happiness and a lot of man's troubles!] And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and the Lord brought her to the man. [The Lord did not hide her in the trees and say, "Now you find her"; He brought her to the man. God's timing is always perfect.] And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called woman [Ishshah], because she was taken out of Man [Ish]." For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife [the doctrine of right man and right woman]; and they shall become one flesh.

Adam did not have a father or mother, nor did his wife, so this passage is establishing precedent for human history. Under the first mention principle, when the Bible sets a precedent, it is establishing a principle from the beginning of time to the end of human history. In this case, this precedent is designed to prevent interference into the privacy of the two who have made the decision to marry. Marital problems are no one else's business. This pattern of intimacy between the man and the woman was established at the creation of man, Gen 2:21-25.

In Eph 5:31-33, we have the principle that just as there is one edification complex for one soul (one developed system of thinking), there is one man for one woman in God's design: "For this cause [the analogy between the Church and Christ in the previous verse] a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great [the oneness of the soul of the mature believer with the Lord Jesus Christ, developed by building the edification complex and receiving the mind of Christ]; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." Our relationship and intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ on earth depends upon the edification complex in our soul (our soul structure). God has perfectly designed a system of thinking for our relationship with His Son Jesus Christ.

Is the woman commanded to *love* the man? The answer is "No"! If she is the right woman, that will never be a problem. However, throughout this passage, the husband is commanded to love the woman, whereas she is commanded to respect him, Eph 5:33, "*And let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.*" The verb for "respect" is the present middle subjunctive form of *phobeo*, which means to respect, to be in awe of, to revere, and to treat with esteem, courtesy, high regard, or reverential obedience. When a man has the right woman she will respect him. When the right man *initiates* love to the right woman, she *responds* with respect. The key for the woman is not "love and hate," but respect. Whether she loves him or is angry with him, she still respects him; these are all normal responses to the right man. The factor that will be developed in the woman's relationship with the right man is *respect*; the factor that will be developed in the man's relationship with the woman is love—an aggressive, initiating love.

There are three prominent grace gifts given by Christ to man in Scripture; this is the order in which they occurred in the human race:

1. The right woman. He built her, Gen 2:22.
2. Salvation. He did it, Joh 19:30.
3. Doctrine. He thought it, 1Co 2:16.

The first great decision that you make is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The second-greatest decision you can make is to respond to the ministry of your right pastor-teacher, who can teach you Bible doctrine and the mind of Christ. Then, the third-greatest decision is finding the right man or right woman God has designed for your life. However, in all of human history, the right woman is the oldest human gift, when Christ brought the woman to the man in Gen 2:18.

Obviously, the fall of the man and the woman had a profound impact on their relationship, which is a part of our study concerning the mystery. The original design of marriage,

which the first Adam lost, can now be experienced in the spiritual realm for two believers in the Church-age, representing the eternal marriage between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bride, Rev 21:9. God's work is perfect and His gifts are perfect. Whether it is the gift of salvation, the gift of the right-pastor teacher, or the gift of right man or right woman, the gift is designed to fit you perfectly. As we read in Deu 32:4, "The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He." James wrote in Jam 1:17, "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above." Therefore, it should be no surprise that when the Lord gives you any gift, the gift will perfectly suit you. However, it depends upon your volitional (free will) decisions toward all three of these gifts.

THE THIRD WITNESS IN THE CHURCH AGE, PART 2

Ephesians 5:22-33

02/15/04

We are now studying the great mystery of Christian marriage in Eph 5:32, and how the Last Adam (the Lord Jesus Christ) restored all that the first Adam lost at the fall. We have seen that the first Adam lost the divine provisions established by God in the Garden of Eden. The Last Adam recovered all these blessings and gave them back to man, while even building upon their original design. This is a significant part of the historical angelic conflict.

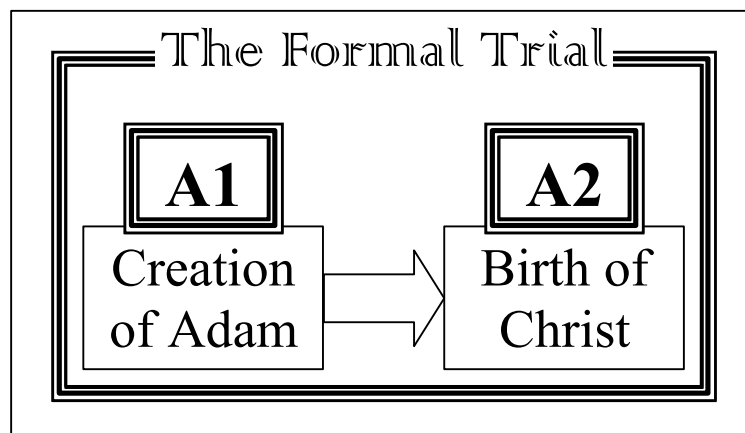
In the Garden of Eden, Adam, the original man, possessed absolute righteousness, lived in perfect environment, and was given the gift of a relationship of intimacy with the woman, and he lost all three. However, in the Church-age, the Last Adam provided a way for man to recover all that the first man lost, and even more, 1Co 15:22,46. We have been given more than Adam ever had in the Garden. Original man received the natural provisions first, but now through the Lord Jesus Christ man receives the greater provisions, which are spiritual.

The laws of evidence as they relate to the angelic conflict are important to understand in this doctrine. The laws of evidence throughout the Bible state that there must always be two or more witnesses in any trial. The witnesses must be interrogated separately and their testimony must agree. In correlation with the laws of evidence in Jewish Jurisprudence, there are three witnesses in the Church-age, (1) the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) the invisible hero (individual believer) and (3) the final witness, which is Christian marriage.

Christian marriage based on the supernatural power of the spiritual life restores the third realm of man's life that Satan destroyed in the Garden of Eden—the gift of a relationship of intimacy between the man and the woman. Like the Lord Jesus Christ and the winner believer, Christian marriage is “interrogated” and tested separately by Satan. Although a minimum of two witnesses is required, the Lord still called the third witness.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the “star witness,” and the invisible hero of the Church-age is the second-most important witness in the appeal trial of Satan. For those who are married and do not see any spiritual light at the end of the tunnel, this doctrine can still apply in the future. The same is true for those who were married but no longer are, and it applies especially to those who have not yet been married.

We have been created to glorify God in the appeal trial of Satan in the angelic conflict. Satan's presentation of his appeal was held between the creation of the first Adam and the incarnation of the Last Adam, between Gen 2:7, the creation of the first Adam (A1), and Mat 1:25, the birth of the Last Adam (A2).



After the first Adam fell, the Last Adam would come to accomplish the strategic resolution of the angelic conflict, and share that resolution and victory with winner believers throughout the ages.

After Satan's appeal comes the rebuttal phase, which began at the birth of Christ and continues to the Rapture of the Church. In the dispensations of the Hypostatic Union and the Church, the prosecution has its answer to Satan's appeal. In the third and final phase of the trial, the closing arguments and summary of the prosecution are presented, and this will begin at the Second Advent and continue through the Millennium.

Christian marriage goes beyond the general institution of marriage and is unique. The standards and values of Christian marriage, as outlined in Eph 5:22-33, are higher than any other standards that have ever been communicated to mankind. These standards can only be fulfilled through the spiritual life of the Church-age.

There are two major problems between the man and the woman that they must face in marriage. The predominant problem with the woman toward the man is lack of respect, Eph 5:22-24, *"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."* The man's predominant problem is bitterness and hypersensitivity, Eph 5:25,28-29; Col 3:19, *"Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter against them."* The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and love her as himself. As a man of God, he must have some measure of confidence and spiritual self-esteem, which is important for the woman as well.

When a marriage fulfills the spiritual life corporately, that marriage becomes a corporate, or collective, witness in the prosecution of Satan, and receives the very highest and best from God, beyond calculation, as well as the recognition of that marriage throughout the eternal state—true fame where it really counts.

Elect angels observe human history while fallen angels oppose human history. In the Church-age, mature believers and those who are dedicated to the plan of God, are on the front lines, and Satan sets himself against these believers with all his "principalities and powers" in all areas of life, including Christian marriage. There is assembled in the heavens the entire angelic host, who are observers in this stage of history.

The concentration and the focus of the elect and fallen angels were greater at the time of the Hypostatic Union than at any other time. In the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, angels observed every detail of the first advent and incarnation of our Lord, 1Ti 3:16, *"And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."*

In the dispensation of the Church-age, angels observe members of the Royal Family of God in their failure or success to execute the predesigned plan of God, 1Co 4:9, Eph 3:10, 1Ti 5:21, 1Pe 1:12. Angels even observe believers receiving commands from headquarters, 1Ti 5:21. Both demons and elect angels are watching Christian marriages, because it is a significant aspect of the uniqueness of the Church-age. Just as the humanity of Christ was observed by angels, so you are observed by angels.

Christian marriage is a part of the testimony against Satan in his appeal trial. Marriage of two believers is the proving ground for the mandates and duties that demand the highest form of virtue that has ever existed. The basis for fulfilling these mandates is two problem-solving devices—personal love for God the Father and impersonal love for all mankind. The mystery doctrine of the Church-age includes a new phenomenon called Christian marriage, Eph 5:32, *"This is a great mystery; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."* Precedence for marriage as a divine institution was established in the Garden of Eden with the divine creation of the man and the formation of the woman from his rib.

When the woman starts to react to her husband, the solution to her problem is responding to the Lord Jesus Christ with personal love for God, and responding to her husband with impersonal love. The husband is mandated to love his wife with a virtue-love of leadership as Christ loved the Church. True, honorable, virtue-love expresses itself in sacrifice for the wife. This is the basis for stability in the national entity.

After the original sin of our first parents, the divine institution of marriage included both believers and unbelievers. No changes were made over thousands of years until the dispensation of the Church. The revelation of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age added a new dimension to marriage. It is only in the Church-age that every believer has a fantastic portfolio of invisible assets for the execution of the spiritual life. The mystery doctrine is revealed exclusively in the New Testament epistles, and established a new manner of lifestyle for Church-age believers, including Christian marriage. Whereas the original divine institution of marriage was for the entire human race, Christian marriage is for Church-age believers only.

A divine institution is for believers and unbelievers, but a Christian institution is for Christians only. In the Church-age, Christian marriage has been given the highest standards that have ever existed or will exist in the human race. God has separated Christian marriage from the original divine institution, and in so doing, He has entered marriage into the prehistoric angelic conflict.

The divine institution of marriage, which began at the creation of mankind, is perpetuated through the entire history of mankind on earth. The sin of Adam and the woman resulted in several changes in the institution of marriage; for example, the purpose of sex in the Garden was for recreation only, but after the fall of man and subsequent spiritual death, a second purpose was added to sex in marriage—procreation for the perpetuation of the human race. The perpetuation of the human race was necessary for the appeal trial of Satan.

The Greek word *musterion* (mystery) refers to the unique doctrines of the Church-age, which were never before revealed; these aspects of marriage were not known in the Old Testament. The Church is the unique dispensation of history. During the Church-age, Christian marriage has taken on far greater challenges and rewards than ever before. Married believers have a special witness for the prosecution and all angels are watching carefully; therefore, the pastor-teacher is mandated to communicate these doctrines.

One of the reasons for this angelic observation is that angels do not experience the intimacy of marriage, Mat 22:29-30. They were all personally created by God, Psa 148:5. Therefore, angels observe members of the Royal Family of God and learn from them, Eph 3:10, 1Pe 1:12. Angels once taught mankind, Gal 3:19; now, in the Church-age, they are being taught by mankind, Eph 3:10. This is why in 1Co 11:10, concerning Christian marriage, it reads, *“Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”*

Marriage is the most demanding of all human relationships, and comes with “double trouble,” 1Co 7:28. However, it can be so much more rewarding when the spiritual life is the center of the marriage, as is true in all relationships, 1Sa 20:23, *“The Lord is between you and me forever.”* To have fellowship with believers based on fellowship with God is something very rare in Christianity today.

Part of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age is this new phenomenon called Christian marriage, Eph 5:32, *“This is a great mystery; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”* God created a new category of marriage for the Church-age, and He gave it the highest form of standards that have ever existed in a relationship between any two people in the human race. If these standards are upheld in a generation, the result is a pivot of mature believers and blessing for the nation. Christian marriage in the dispensation of the Church is part of the testimony that once-and-for-all condemns Satan and all fallen angels to the eternal lake of fire. Therefore, the standards for Christian marriage are much higher than the standards for the unbelievers’ marriage.

This doctrine emphasizes the principle of freedom, authority, and values in marriage. All three are necessary for the intimacy of divinely appointed relationships. Freedom without authority is anarchy, disorder, and confusion; in any institution, there has to be a final authority. Authority without freedom is tyranny. To avoid anarchy, freedom must have values; to avoid tyranny, authority must have virtue.

The testing ground for these principles is Christian marriage. Authority in marriage belongs to the husband, but this authority must be exercised in virtue-love with integrity. This means that personal love for God must provide motivation and correction of action in marriage. Freedom in marriage belongs to both spouses, but such freedom must be exercised from spiritual values, so that freedom and authority in marriage are not in conflict. They are designed by God to establish a testimony in the rebuttal phase of Satan's appeal trial. The husband and wife are given divine directions in the Word of God, through their pastor-teacher, 1Pe 5:3, Act 20:28. When God gives you commands, you have freedom to execute those commands. The source of your freedom is volition.

When a husband exercises tyranny toward his wife, he has taken from her what is most valuable—her freedom. No woman can love a man without being free to exercise her love. This is true of friendship, romance, and marriage. A woman can never love a man when he violates the third law of marriage—"Forgive as Christ forgave." The Three Laws of Marriage are as follows:

1. The responsibility of the man, Eph 5:25, *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself as a substitute for her."* God does not assign the role of leadership in marriage without also assigning appropriate responsibility.
2. The responsibility of the woman, Eph 5:22-24,33. Eph 5:24 says, *"As the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."*
3. The mutual responsibility of husband and wife, Eph 4:32, *"And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."*

How can a wife love her husband, when he is a jealous, bitter, vindictive, implacable loser? When a woman's volition is taken away from her, she has no way of loving her man. A woman can only respond to a man in freedom. If you have no values, you are not capable of love. It takes a greater capacity for love on the woman's part to respect a man and function under his authority. Respect must be the mandate for the Christian wife, because she is under the authority of her husband. When a woman respects her husband, there is no danger of her transferring her affection to another man outside the marriage. Virtue and values always meet in one place, coalescence of bodies and coalescence of souls. This is why premarital sex can destroy what would have been a fantastic marriage, long before the marriage even takes place. Freedom in marriage belongs to both spouses, but must have values to avoid chaos. Freedom must be exercised on the basis of spiritual values related to the mystery doctrine of the predesigned plan of God.

Freedom in marriage demands a personal sense of responsibility. Having freedom does not mean anything unless you exercise responsibility with that freedom. Freedom without responsibility is apathy, which is tantamount to negative volition toward Bible doctrine. Apathy means failure to follow the predesigned plan of God and therefore failure in Christian marriage. Marriage is a testing ground for the spiritual life.

If you can make it in marriage, you can make it in any relationship in life. Marriage is much more demanding than any other relationship and can also be much more rewarding. This new attitude toward marriage only exists in the Church-age, because this is the only dispensation where every believer can use the fantastic spiritual life provided by God to fulfill such principles as Phi 4:11-13, being content in any circumstances.

So, freedom in marriage belongs to both spouses, but must be exercised through the spiritual values of the mystery doctrine of the predesigned plan of God. Once the pressure is taken off the role of the husband and wife in marriage, and the focus is set on the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ,

than neither partner will fall into unrealistic expectation in the marriage. They will live for Christ instead of one another.

THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUM

The 2004 Florida Conference

Revelation 2:12-17

02/22/04

This week we held our third annual Florida Bible Conference. The Florida congregation did a fantastic job of hosting this conference, and we would like to thank all those who made this a success, especially the Pomeroy's, for a job well done!

Our subject was the Church of Pergamum, a continuation of our study on the seven churches of Asia in Rev 2-3. There are two different interpretations of these seven churches; one is that the seven churches portray seven historical stages the church would go through in chronological order; the second is that they represent seven different types of churches or individual believers that appear in every generation. Both interpretations are valid.

In Rev 2:1 we saw the church in Ephesus who left their first love; in Rev 2:8 the church in Smyrna went through tremendous tribulation and poverty. Now we begin with Rev 2:12, the church in Pergamum. Pergamum became the capital of the Roman province of Asia (modern-day Turkey). It was a place of ever-growing population, a "melting pot" of growing interests, and it was a center of religious and cultic worship.

A conical hill stood behind the capital, and it was guarded by shrines and temples of pagan gods. The church and individual believers in Pergamum in Rev 2:14 are warned about the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel and committed acts of immorality. Therefore, the Pergamum believer was warned about compromising and becoming a stumbling block to others.

In Rev 2:12, the Lord says, "*And to the pastor-teacher of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this...*" The Greek word translated "sword" is *romfaian*, which is a different word than the word for "sword" in Heb 4:12, which is *machaira*, the sword of the word of God. The *machaira* was an 18" sword made for thrusting, while the *romfaian* was a long, broad sword used for slashing. In Rev 2:12, this sword is in the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, and here He is pictured as the Son of God with the right to judge the nations, as well as His prerogative for divine discipline on born-again believers. All judgment is in the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glorified Hypostatic union. In Rev 2:13 the Lord is saying, "I am perfectly aware of the conditions in which you find yourself now. I am aware of the adversities you face, and I am aware of the inclination of your heart." God knows where every one of us dwells. If it is a place surrounded by carnality, we must remember how important it is to not compromise. The believer who makes a difference is the one who maintains an uncompromising witness as they remain on the cutting edge of evil.

The Lord continues in Rev 2:13, "*I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.*" Satan has particular locations in every generation where he is most active. His throne will be found where there has been a meltdown of values and volition related to divine establishment, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and Bible doctrine. Pergamum was the center of the most concentrated satanic activity at the time, and in Rev 2:13, Antipas was martyred, the first Christian to be put to death by the Roman state.

"*And you hold fast My name...*" They had not compromised their doctrine, even though they were under satanic attack, and had not given up their testimony of the name of Christ. Antipas was one of the invisible heroes of the Church-age, whose names will be written in the historical record section of heaven forever, Rev 3:12. Some of the greatest words we could ever hear from our Lord are

in Mat 25:21, *“Well done, good and faithful servant.”* Antipas had become a witness against Satan, right in the midst of Satan’s capital.

Antipas is one of the few names of the otherwise anonymous believers who become a “faithful witness.” Faithfulness is what impresses God, Num 12:7-8, and what brings blessings and riches to a believer in time (Pro 28:20, Luk 16:10-12) and in eternity (Mat 25:21). Faithfulness is found in a minister who consistently teaches doctrine to his congregation, 2Ti 2:2-7. Faithfulness also results in the crown of life, Rev 2:10.

Faithfulness must be shown toward God, right man or right woman, friends, the Royal Family, fellow congregational members, and workers on the job. Faithfulness toward God is the believer’s capacity to love God and to respond to God’s love based on Bible doctrine in his soul; it reaches its peak when the believer attains maturity and occupation with Christ. The command for faithfulness is found in such passages as Deu 6:5, 10:12, 11:13. Faithfulness toward God establishes the standard for grace and deliverance from the Lord, Psa 31:23, and bestows strength for adversity, Heb 11:27.

Antipas was executed in the pagan worship services of the serpent god, the so-called “god of healing.” According to historical tradition, he was roasted to death in a large brass bowl used for sacrifices to demons. His persecutors threw him in and heated the bowl to furnace temperature. However, something extraordinary apparently happened, as Antipas was heard singing hymns to the Lord Jesus Christ! And at Satan’s throne itself, the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified. Many of these demonized priests who officiated at the death of Antipas heard the Gospel from his lips before He died.

Pergamum was an ancient, wealthy city; the name “Pergamum” means “citadel,” and it became a citadel and stronghold of Satan. Satan controls certain wealthy and powerful political and social celebrities in every generation, who have been instrumental in the perpetuating of his lie and all its forms. Celebrities can have a profound effect on thoughtless masses of people who mindlessly imitate their philosophy, politics, and religion.

Satan’s methodology has always been directed toward weakening the nations (Isa 14:12) especially the corruption of client nations to God. Satanic hatred is reproduced in people who are jealous and hateful toward the principles that have made our nation a place of freedom, divine establishment, and evangelism. Many even within the U.S.A. hate this nation and what it stands for. However, no matter how evil the world becomes, the Lord Jesus Christ controls history; Satan does not.

In Rev 2:14 the Lord Jesus Christ mentions Antipas as a witness for the prosecution, a faithful witness, to give encouragement; however, the Lord also has a warning: *“But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality.”* In every congregation, some believers succumb to false doctrines and the demonic assault against the soul.

Balak was the king of the Moabites at the time of the Exodus generation, and he wanted to destroy Israel, so he hired Balaam. Balak basically offered to make him a millionaire, if he would curse Israel. One day this psychotic prophet was riding down the road on his donkey, or jackass, and the jackass saw a *Theophany* (an Old Testament manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ), the angel of Jehovah, standing in the way, to prevent Balaam from carrying out his evil task, but Balaam did not see Him. Balaam kept whipping the donkey until the Lord, in His great sense of humor, gave the donkey the power of speech for a few minutes, and the jackass said, “Why are you hitting me? I haven’t done anything!”

Balaam thought that he could curse the people whom God had irrevocably blessed, but that is a losing battle. When he could not curse God’s people, he kept advising Balak to induce the Israelites to eat that which was sacrificed to idols and to engage in sexual immorality. Balaam said in effect to

Balak, "I know these men from Israel; if you start sending your women to them, they can seduce the men, and they will adopt your religion, and then they will fall. I cannot curse them because they are God's elect, but we can destroy their spiritual life."

The Lord is warning the church of Pergamum that they are too tolerant of antinomianism and false doctrine. Toleration becomes a breeding ground for serious compromise and damage to the spiritual life. The way of Balaam is residence and function in the cosmic system; it is the wasted life of the believer who fails to utilize the provisions of logistic grace, and therefore fails to glorify God. The way of Balaam is the willful acceptance of compromise and contradiction, and flexibility with evil. The way of Balaam includes rejection of authority resulting in arrogance and hatred. Balaam, as a believer living in the cosmic system, had a serious case of monetary reversionism, the lust for wealth.

Money is not evil in itself, but there are monetary dangers for believers as well as unbelievers. Money is a useful servant, but a very cruel master. God's Word clearly tells us that we do not "own" anything, but that God allows us to use His possessions, Hag 2:8, "*The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts.*" When we recognize this, God's laws of prosperity will start to fall into place.

The error of Balaam was three-fold:

1. The assumption that money is a means of happiness.
2. The assumption that money can buy power and authority.
3. The assumption that money can buy security.

Balaam became the sixth sheik of the Midianites, even though he was not a Midianite. However, with all his power and wealth, he died miserably under the sin unto death, Num 31:8. No matter how well you have succeeded in life, you have the responsibility to ask yourself, "Are you just another vapor trail?" Jam 4:13-14, "*Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.*" If Bible Doctrine is not your priority, your life is a meaningless vapor trail that will disappear into the sin unto death.

The believers at Pergamum were contributing to the downtrend in the region. If they went much further, there would be no difference between them and the religious unbelievers. What Balaam could not accomplish by divination and cursing, he accomplished by teaching false doctrine. He taught King Balak how to destroy Israel as a client nation. Balaam earned his fee by showing Moab and Midian how to neutralize the Jews. The effectiveness of Balaam's teaching is noted in Num 25; the men began to indulge in fornication (the phallic cult) with the women of Moab. The old-time religion always used sex with evangelism. Balaam used the old-time religion of Canaan, the religion that God had warned the Jews about as they entered the land. Balaam attacked Israel by *distraction* rather than destruction. *Religion* is the doctrine of Balaam.

As goes the believer, so goes the client nation to God. This was true in the day this was written, A.D. 96. It was true of client nation Rome (S.P.Q.R.), just as it is true of client nation U.S.A. in the 21st century. Believers in the cosmic system destroy the power and effectiveness of the client nation.

Rev 2:14-15 goes on, "*But I have a few things against you, because you have there believers who adhere to the doctrine of Balaam, who kept teaching [or inculcating] Balak, to set a trap for the citizens of Israel, namely to eat things sacrificed to idols and to fornicate. Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.*" In the midst of the church at Pergamum, there were believers who put a stumbling block before other members of the church, and it is absolutely vital that we separate from believers like these. In 2Co 12:15, the more you grow spiritually, the less company you begin to keep. The last thing we need is to hang around people who influence our spiritual life in a negative way. There comes a time when God's people need to learn the importance of separation, and the importance of godly friends and fellowship. When we accept something or someone in the cosmic

system, we are in partnership with the cosmic system; therefore, we are given the order: *“Come out from among them.”* As a believer grows spiritually, one of his first functions in the plan of God must be to separate from the crowd that once lead him in the wrong direction.

The Nicolaitans were Gnostics in the pursuit of intellectualism, and their name was derived from two Greek words, *nike* (over) and *laos* (peoples), meaning the winner over the people, defeating or overcoming the people. Balaam found a way for Balak to overcome the people of Israel. While the phallic cult of the Nicolaitans was rejected in Ephesus, Rev 2:6, it was effective with many of the believers in Pergamum. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans justified lasciviousness and anti-establishment behavior through a system of substituting religion for bible doctrine. This the reason for the command in Rev 2:16 *“Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.”* The word “repent” is the *aorist active imperative* form of *metanoeo*, which means a change of mind, and is a command for all believers in the cosmic system.

The Lord issues declarations of divine discipline from the Supreme Court of Heaven to the believer who refuses to rebound and returns to the *cosmos*. This is a warning against arrogance and emotionalism, which are the two great enemies of the spiritual life and produce loser believers—even if those believers had once reached spiritual adulthood. There are no substitutes for rebound. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ says five times to five different churches to *metanoeo*, to change one’s mind and recover, as in Rev 2:16-17, *“Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes [the winner believer], to him I will give some of the hidden manna [escrow blessing for time and eternity], and I will give him a white stone [votes were cast with colored pebbles in the ancient world; this is God’s vote of approval for the winner], and a new name [a royal title in the eternal heraldry] written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”* Both in time and eternity, believers are classified as either winners or losers. Winners are believers who live in the predesigned plan of God, pass the tests, advance to maturity, and glorify Jesus Christ. Losers are Christians who fail in time, but they never lose their salvation. They have no impact on history and therefore a lower rank in heaven and no authority in the Millennium. Winners are described in Rev 2-3 by the present active participle of *nikao* (he who overcomes), as in Rev 2:7,11,17,26, 3:5,12,21.

At the Rapture, all winners will receive a “white pebble,” a resurrection body with a new name of knighthood, Rev 2:17. These believers have the greatest of all fame for eternity. The winner has phenomenal impact and blessing in time as well as reward in eternity. Mature believers have a tremendous influence on every facet of life. Blessing in time is a guarantee of blessings in eternity. Major decorations are given to the winner at the Judgment Seat of Christ:

- Crown of righteousness. This crown is awarded at the judgment seat of Christ to the Church-age believer who fulfills the predesigned plan of God by the advance to spiritual maturity.
- Crown of life. This crown is awarded to the Church-age believer who endured trials, heartaches, and disasters and glorified God, Jam 1:12. The crown of life is awarded to all members of the Royal Family of God who utilize the problem-solving devices, advance to maturity, and then pass evidence testing with God’s perfect happiness.
- Incorruptible crown. This crown is given to those who mastered the old sin nature through dedication to the predesigned plan of God. These are the believers who were disciplined, faithful, dependable, and self-motivated. They gave and served and were faithful to Bible class.
- Crown of rejoicing. This crown is given to soul winners, 1Th 2:19, *“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?”* These individuals were accurate in their communication of the Gospel, and were not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They led others to the grace and truth found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Crown of glory. This crown is awarded to pastors who faithfully study and teach Bible doctrine to their congregation, the doctrine by which he and positive members of his congregation attain spiritual maturity. The motivation for the pastor must be occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ.

History pales in comparison to all eternity. Your time on earth is a drop in the ocean compared to eternity. Anyone who places other things in life above doctrine in his scale of values is wasting the equal privilege and opportunity God has provided for us in time to advance spiritually. All those “other things” will become so very meaningless to you in eternity, at most adding up to your regret in eternity. Although we can never lose our salvation, we become losers without the right priorities. Part of the agony of the sin unto death is the realization that one had an opportunity to make his life count in a fantastic way, but instead chose to follow the plan of Satan. When you look at your life from the divine viewpoint and realize how meaningless, vain, and empty life is without the Lord Jesus Christ and a personal sense of destiny, you are faced with a decision: Do you want to be a hotshot in time, whose legacy is nothing more than a snapshot in an album or a picture on a wall?! Don’t wait until it’s too late!

NO MAN'S LAND

Philippians 4:8

02/29/04

Our corrected translation of Phi 4:5-7 reads: *"Let your supergrace mental attitude be known to all men. The Lord is near. Stop worrying about anything, but in every circumstance through prayer and through supplication for personal needs after thanksgivings let your requests or petitions be revealed to the God. In fact, that spiritual peace and prosperity from the source of the God, which surpasses or rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts [right lobe of the soul], also your motivation or minds in Christ Jesus."* In our study of the book of *Philippians*, we are now on Phi 4:8, *"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."* In verses 8-13, we see the advance to the ultra-supergrace life.

Ultra-supergrace is the most advanced stage of spiritual maturity in time, history, and the angelic conflict. In ultra-supergrace, the believer receives maximum opposition from the satanic forces of evil, and this is the highest decoration he can receive from God. We have examples of this in the winner believers of Smyrna, Rev 2:9-10, and Pergamum, Rev 2:13. In both these churches, some believers stayed with the plan of God and went forward, while others, in the same congregation under the same teaching, did not. Unfortunately, this is where divisions can take place.

Examples of believers who reached ultra-supergrace include:

1. Moses reached ultra-supergrace and received persecution from his nation and family (unbelievers and believers) and demons.
2. Jeremiah reached ultra-supergrace and received maximum pressure during the fifth cycle of discipline in Judah.
3. Paul reached ultra-supergrace and received maximum opposition from satanic forces, Act 19:15.
4. God's testimony concerning David is found in Act 13:22, *"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will."*

Ultra-supergrace is the sphere of the angelic conflict between the unfairness of the devil's world and the total fairness of God to mature believers. These believers are placed under maximum testing and pressure, which is allowed by God and administered by Satan, 2Ti 2:10, 3:11-12.

The blessings of supergrace are intensified and protected by God even under the most intense pressure, persecution, and attack from Satan. Supergrace is the beginning stage of suffering for blessing and victory in the angelic conflict. Beyond supergrace is an even higher plain, where the mature believer has all the blessings of supergrace, but he is completely surrounded by suffering, pressure, and adversity, which only intensify these blessings. The conflict is between the unfairness of the devil's world and the total fairness of God, 2Ti 2:10-14, *"For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen [the elect], that they also may obtain [acquire] the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory [escrow blessings in the eternal state]. It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure [in suffering for blessing], we shall rule with Him [as mature believers]. If we deny Him [in time, by rejecting the predesigned plan of God], He will deny us [rewards, escrow blessings]. If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers."*

Moses and Paul are two illustrations of ultra-supergrace. Both reached ultra-supergrace, in which their lives were enshrouded with continual pressure and suffering. During this time of tremendous pressure, they had great blessings from the Lord, 2Ti 3:8-11, *"And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men [reversionistic believers and unbelievers of Paul's time] also*

oppose the truth [Bible doctrine], *men of depraved mind* [corrupted mentality], *rejected as regards the faith*. *But they will not make further progress; for their folly* [lack of sense] *will be obvious to all, as also that of those two came to be*. *But you followed my teaching* [doctrine], *conduct* [self-discipline], *purpose* [teaching and building up the body of Christ], *faith* [faithfulness], *patience* [steadfastness], *love, perseverance* [endurance], *persecutions, and sufferings* [the shroud wrapped around the ultra-supergrace believer], *such as happened to me at Antioch* [pressure from legalism], *at Iconium* [a conspiracy to stone him], *and at Lystra* [he was actually stoned to death, and God brought him back from the dead]; *what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me!*" His perseverance was the ability to undergo opposition and criticism without giving up, or giving in to cowardice or self-pity. This is the highest honor that God can give to a believer in time; it is the highest dignity ever bestowed on human being.

Beyond supergrace is ultra-supergrace, a higher plain where there is a demonstration of the maximum power in grace, Eph 1:18-20; it is also described as pursuing grace, Psa 23:5c-6, Eph 1:3-6. The blessings of ultra-supergrace are beyond human imagination, Eph 3:20-21. In ultra-supergrace, the believer receives maximum opposition from the satanic forces of evil, which are accompanied by the highest decoration the believer can receive from God, indicating great future blessings in eternity.

In Phi 4, Paul is in supergrace and approaching the final objective of ultra-supergrace; in verse 8, he introduces the principle of capacity for life, which is necessary for this spiritual advance. Believers who lack capacity for life are boring and no fun to be around; they are too intense and full of legalism. It was people like this who mocked our Lord and Savior in Mat 27:39, "*And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads.*" They think they are serving God, Joh 16:2; they often call themselves "grace Christians," yet they couldn't be more legalistic.

"No Man's Land," as we have noted in the past, is what the mature believer must cross between supergrace and ultra-supergrace, and it will determine how strong the doctrine in his soul really is. It is the great test of motivation and mental attitude, as well as capacity for life. No Man's Land is where you will face many opponents and adversaries, people manipulated by the kingdom of darkness to stop your momentum. Many will speak evil of you, your pastor, your church, etc, and it is actually a sign that you are on the right path, Luk 6:22, Mat 5:11, "*Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.*" Consider it a compliment when evil people are dedicated to destroying you or your local assembly.

When you enter this spiritual No Man's Land, you will experience all manner of pressures and undeserved suffering. You will have to make sacrifices and suffer apparent losses to ultimately fulfill God's plan. You may even start looking back and thinking how better off you were before! The most dangerous stage of the spiritual life is in No Man's Land.

You will come under the most vicious satanic attacks, where even your friends and your loved ones are affected. There will be confusion in your life, which no one else understands. You will be attacked spiritually, physically, or mentally, as Job was, and you will be tempted to get distracted from your calling. This is where you have finally gotten Satan's attention, and you are ambushed by demonic attacks.

No Man's Land is a dangerous place to be, however, this danger will be a positive experience in the plan of God, as alluded to in Phi 2:12, "*So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, be accomplishing your own preservation in danger.*" You become more and more isolated as you advance deeper into no man's land. In this isolation you begin to leave behind friends, family members, and acquaintances because you discover that you have nothing in common with them. You become integrated with those who have positive volition toward doctrine. As you go forward in the spiritual life, you cannot help but develop rapport with those who are on the same battlefield with you.

There are many people who may get left behind—a mother, father, sister, brother, wife, husband, son, daughter, girlfriend, or boyfriend—and get lost in the shuffle. They did not go forward but you kept going, and therefore there will come a time in your life when your scale of values concerning people will change, and you undergo the greatest change of friends you could imagine. In maintaining your spiritual momentum, you will inevitably lose rapport with certain people, especially those who have fallen by the wayside and are negative toward doctrine. However, you will gain rapport with those fighting the battle alongside you. As on any battlefield, there are people who become casualties along the way, and the battlefield of No Man's Land thins out the ranks and reveals the difference between those who have a pseudo positive volition and those who have a genuine positive volition toward doctrine. It is a shame that many of God's people are not curious at all about why they are here; so many believers lead lives of boredom and indifference, which kill the spiritual life; they are only concerned with overt appearances and avoiding adversity, Gal 6:12-13.

First on the agenda of Phi 4:8 is capacity for life, which manifests itself in many areas. It begins with capacity for appreciating God, i.e., occupation with Christ, maximum *Category 1 love*. This is the basis for developing capacity for *Category 2 love*, toward one's mate, and *Category 3 love*, toward one's friends. Sadly, many believers will never have any true friendships in life because they do not have capacity for love, which only comes from doctrine resident in the soul. Bible doctrine builds capacity for who and what God is, as well as for what He provides in the spiritual realm. This includes capacity for happiness and, by way of contrast, capacity for adversity. This verse brings out the various facets of capacity for life, which are all necessary for crossing No Man's Land.

"Finally, brethren..." Phi 4:8 begins with the definite article *to* with the adverb *loipon* (translated "finally"), meaning "from now on," "in the future," or "therefore." Here we must look back at the previous seven verses:

- Now that you understand the importance of standing firm and advancing, and not retreating (verse 1).
- Now that you understand the importance of having the same viewpoint and thinking objectively by means of the Lord (verse 2).
- Now that you understand the importance of having perfect happiness by means of the Lord at all times (verse 4).
- Now that you understand the importance of letting your supergrace mental attitude be known to all men (verse 5).
- Now that you understand the importance of not worrying about anything (verse 6).
- Now that you understand that the spiritual peace and prosperity from God, which surpasses and rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts and also your motivation (verse 7).

"Now that you understand the importance of all of these principles" is the meaning of the phrase *to loipon*, translated "finally" or "from now on." This is the introduction to Phi 4:8.

The next word, translated "brethren," is the vocative plural noun *adelphoi*, which serves as a reminder to those who are making the spiritual advance that they are members of the Royal Family of God. It emphasizes the fact that, in this dispensation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit enters all believers into union with Christ, making them Royal Family of God forever. The baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur until Christ was resurrected, ascended, and seated at the right hand of God the Father, who said, *"Sit down at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."* This verified the authenticity of the work of Christ on the Cross, as well as revealing a new form of royalty for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is divine royalty because He is God; He is called the Son of God, and His Royal Family is God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is also Jewish royalty as the Son of David. Now that He seated at the right hand of the father, He has attained a third royalty—His battlefield royalty. His title is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Since there was not yet a Royal Family to accompany our Lord's third royal title, the Jewish age was brought to a screeching halt, and the Church-age began. The purpose for the Church-age is simple—to call out (*ekklesia*) a Royal Family for the battlefield royalty of Jesus Christ; we are the kings and lords that He is King and Lord over. Therefore, because the Church-age is so unique, it began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit whereby the believer is entered into union with Christ. Being in union with Christ, Church-age believers share all that Christ is and has, for the Head and the body are united in one spiritual entity. We share:

- His life, which is eternal life, 1Jo 5:11-12.
- His righteousness, 2Co 5:21.
- His election, an “escrow” election, Eph 1:3-4.
- His destiny, called “predestination,” Eph 1:5-6.
- His sonship, Gal 3:26. He is the Son of God; we are “sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”
- His heirship. We are joint-heirs with the Son of God, Rom 8:16-17.
- His priesthood. We are a royal priesthood, 1Pe 2:5,9.
- His adoption. We are adopted into the Royal Family of God, Eph 1:5.
- His Kingship. We are a Royal Family of kings, 1Co 4:8.

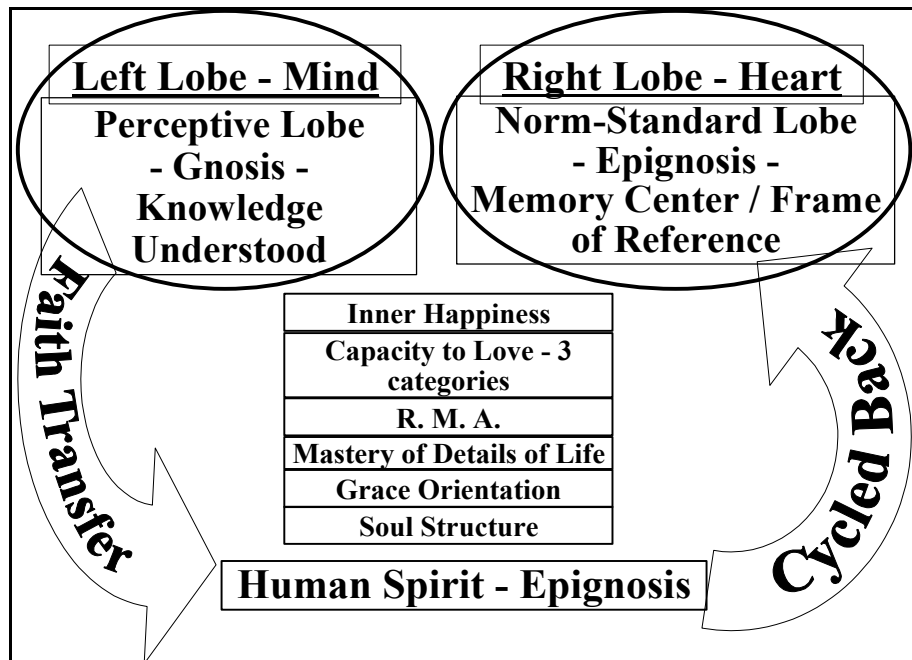
We have eternal security; we can never lose our union with Christ whether we are winners or losers. How can a believer say life is boring and empty?!

The term “brethren” is very significant in the New Testament. As all great doctrinal principles, it has been distorted, abused, and misused by Satan and the kingdom of darkness, and today, many emotional, self-righteous individuals are calling each other “brother this” and “sister that.” In reality, “brethren” designates the uniqueness of the dispensation of the Church-age. It reminds you that your life, no matter how dull it may seem at times, or how difficult it gets, has very clear meaning, purpose, and definition.

“From now on, brethren [members of the Royal Family of God], whatever is...” “Whatever” is the pronoun *hosa*, which indicates the many different aspects of capacity for life for the Royal Family. This is followed by the *present active indicative* form of the verb *eimi*, translated “is,” and then six adjectives that describe supergrace capacity for life, and are needed to cross into No Man’s Land between supergrace and ultra-supergrace: *“...whatever is true(doctrine), whatever is honorable(establishment), whatever is right(righteous), whatever is pure, whatever is lovely(capacity to love), whatever is of good repute(commendable), if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”*

The first of these six principles is the word “true.” This is the *predicate nominative neuter singular* adjective *alethe*, which refers to the doctrines, principles, and policies of God as preserved in His Word and transferred to our souls in the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. All capacity for life first comes from doctrine resident in the soul of the believer. The truth we have in our souls is the result of all the times we have taken in Bible doctrine by perceiving it in the left lobe (mind) and then believing it the right lobe (*kardia*).

Bible doctrine enters the left lobe as *gnosis*, something you know, but knowing is not enough; it must be transferred to the right lobe where it becomes *epignosis*, something you *understand*. You may know something, but still fail to understand it, and you cannot apply and use it until you understand it. The mature believer lives in truth and builds a capacity for life because he not only knows and understands the truth, but he can also *apply* the truth to his life. Truth is a passion and one cannot merely learn it—one must *possess* it. You must, as Paul says, *“Let your mind dwell on these things.”* And the first one he mentions is truth.



THE TRIALS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Matthews 26

03/07/04

Philippians Phi 4:8 (corrected translation) From now on, members of the Royal family of God, whatever is [keeps on being] true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Of the six principles listed here, the first is “true,” which is the Greek adjective *alethe*. This refers to the doctrines, principles, and policies of God as preserved His Word of God and transferred to our souls by the daily function of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. Therefore, we must “let our minds dwell on these things.”

It was the Roman governor Pontius Pilate who asked that most important question in Joh 18:38, “*What is truth?*” To Pilate, truth was about self-preservation, however, to the One he was addressing, the Lord Jesus Christ, truth meant self-sacrifice. While one was trying to *save* his flesh, the other was *giving* His flesh for the sins of the world.

Truth withstands the test of experience, Mat 23:1-3. Truth (doctrine) will make you stable, secure, and certain concerning the future. It will enable you to be certain, confident, positive, and assured without being arrogant, because a vital aspect of truth is humility, Psa 25:8-9. If these virtues are being developed in you, it is a good sign that you are under the right teaching, Luk 6:40. We have the responsibility to check out and verify what we are being taught, Act 17:11.

Aletheia (noun form of *alethe*) means integrity of character. An individual with integrity of character will be constant, dedicated, devoted, loyal, and steadfast. When he lives in *aletheia*, he will not be hypocritical, phony, or deceitful, but will have the proper motivation. It is impossible to serve the Lord without truth as one’s motivation. You cannot be sincere and serve the Lord; you must possess the truth, Jos 24:14, 1Sa 12:24.

Doctrine is the first basic ingredient that the believer needs to serve the Lord; it enlightens the believer and guides the believer in the angelic conflict and spiritual warfare, in Psa 43:3. Truth leads us to worship God properly, but it is something that we must be taught; it does not come naturally, Psa 25:5. God the Holy Spirit uses the doctrine we have been taught to protect us from deception, Joh 14:26. The Apostle Paul warns us that in the last days truth will be rejected and deception increase, 2Ti 4:3-4. Truth alone protects us from deception—not our feelings and emotions. Truth also protects us from many unnecessary self-induced problems. Lying makes a problem part of the future while truth makes a problem part of the past. God desires truth in us, because truth is who God is, Psa 51:6. He reveals grace and mercy by His truth, 2Pe 3:18.

None of us could ever face truth if it was not accompanied by grace and mercy, Psa 85:10-11. Grace is for our present need; mercy is for our past. In fact, mercy is God’s grace in action directed toward our past. God’s righteousness looks down from heaven on His truth in us. His righteousness and justice are completely satisfied when He sees his truth functioning in man. In Joh 1:14, the Lord Jesus Christ was full of grace and truth, and He said in Joh 15:3, “*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*” It is through spoken words of truth that the believer becomes clean, Joh 17:17, “*Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.*” You cannot change the truth, but the truth can change you.

Only grace and truth can deliver us from the power of sin and the influence of evil, Pro 16:6, an without truth it is impossible to worship God properly, Joh 4:23-24, 14:15-17 (God the Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of *aletheia*,” the Spirit of doctrine). If anyone loves the Lord he will study His Word, Bible doctrine, 2Ti 2:15, 3Jo 1:4. Truth will always prevail, even though it is the direct enemy of the kingdom of darkness in spiritual warfare, 2Co 13:8. People involved in religion and self-righteousness

despise truth, and Paul said to the legalistic Galatians in Gal 4:16, “*Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth?*” The key to capacity for life is Bible doctrine resident in the soul. The truth that sets people free is unfortunately the truth that most people refuse to hear.

The next word we need to consider in Phi 4:8 is “honorable”: “*From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is [keeps on being] true [according to doctrine], whatever is honorable...*” This is the Greek adjective *semna*, which means honorable, noble, or respectful. This area of capacity deals with the principles of freedom, honor, and respect. We are to show honor and respect to both believers and unbelievers. The human must be perpetuated under freedom, giving people the opportunity to choose for or against Jesus Christ, and for or against Bible doctrine after salvation, and freedom requires the principles of honor and respect, the *establishment* principles.

The Lord has made it possible for each one of us to choose between the Tree of Life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Tree of Life is your choice for truth, the word of God; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the satanic policy, the satanic genius of human good and evil, and creature credit over creator credit. In His matchless grace, God the Father ensured that, when man chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the human race would be perpetuated till the end of time, without compromising man’s free will. From the fall of man to the end of time, the angelic conflict goes on, because the volition of the human soul is protected.

God has provided and protected freedom while Satan has had a plan to interfere and remove freedom from the beginning of the human race. It is Satan’s objective to destroy freedom so that no one freely make the choices to believe in Christ and commit themselves to Bible doctrine. The Gospel is available to all, and God has preserved the Gospel, the doctrine of salvation. Because the unbeliever is spiritually dead, he cannot comprehend Gospel information, 1Co 2:14, however, God the Holy Spirit, acting as a human spirit, makes real to him and makes his faith effective for salvation.

The yearning for the Lord and for His Word will drive you to Bible class and enable you to overcome the distractions of life. Man’s frame of reference is philosophical speculation, but human I.Q. is not a frame of reference for the perception of doctrine. Our frame of reference is the human spirit and the predesigned plan of God. The omnipotence of the Holy Spirit inside the predesigned plan of God produces *receptive comprehension*, enabling us to understand and utilize divine viewpoint.

Your real spiritual status quo is known only by you and the Lord. Under the privacy of the priesthood, you are not subject to investigation by other believers. The Bible teaches in 1Co 11:28, 2Co 13:5, Gal 6:4, that we are to examine *ourselves* and our *own* work. Under the doctrine of privacy, we do not have the right to examine other believers because we do not have the power look inside their soul and examine their motivation. There are times we can expect unjust and unfair treatment, and we need to give it over to the Supreme Court of heaven and the Supreme Court Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1Pe 2:9, we are members of the Royal Family of God forever, and we our “God’s own possession.” Our royal priesthood must have privacy to fulfill its mission in this life, therefore, no believer has the right to intrude on the privacy of another. Throughout the Gospels the Lord dealt with the disciples privately, Mat 17:19, 24:3; Mar 4:34, 9:28; Luk 10:23. Paul respected the privacy of the leaders of the Jerusalem church when he presented the Gospel to the Gentiles for their consideration, Gal 2:2. In Joh 21:21-22, Peter was sticking his nose into John’s business, and the Lord told him to pay attention to his own life. Judging others is a violation of privacy, Rom 14:4,10, and apostates always violate the privacy of other people, 1Ti 5:13. Freedom means the right to life, property, and privacy, and it is violated by gossiping, maligning, and judging.

Freedom is the basis of true evangelism and for spiritual growth. You are free to make your own decision, and it must be a free decision without coercion. The freedom to choose gives the human race the right to life and liberty, sometimes called the pursuit of happiness, provided that it does not violate establishment principles and the law of the land.

The next characteristic Paul mentions in Phi 4:8 is “whatever is right”: *“From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true, whatever is honorable [noble, worthy of respect], whatever is right...”* The *predicate nominative neuter plural* form of the adjective *dikaios* means righteous, equitable, fair, or just. There are many injustices in life, and if you let your mind dwell on those things, they will destroy your peace of mind. Normally *dikaios* connotes righteousness as the attribute and characteristic of God, or the fulfillment of that which God requires of men. However, the neuter gender denotes the obligation to be fair and just. As you advance in the spiritual life from supergrace to ultra-supergrace (from spiritual maturity to the qualification to be a witness in the historical phase of the angelic conflict), you need to let your mind dwell on that which is just and fair. Supergrace capacity for life includes this sense of justice, of fair play, and of right treatment toward all in one’s personal life.

When you enter No Man’s Land, you will be tested by people. People are going to be unfair and unjust, and you must not lower yourself to their level. Capacity for righteousness and just treatment of others enables the believer to avoid divisiveness, conspiracies, vengeance, and cruelty to others. To be fair and equitable, regardless of any personal feeling in the matter, is essential in any type of leadership.

No greater example exists of one being just and righteous while being treated unjustly than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the only celebrity of the Christian faith, Joh 15:20, 1Pe 2:13-24. The greatest injustice ever conceived is the treatment of our Lord during his six trials before the religious Jewish leaders and the Romans. With the exception of one short interrogation, these six trials were unfair and unjust in every way. On trial was the unique Person of the universe, undiminished deity and true humanity forever, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In His humanity, He had no sin nature nor did He ever commit one act of personal sin, 1Pe 2:22. He performed only absolute good, and He was indwelt and filled by the Holy Spirit at all times. One of the greatest systems of jurisprudence was abused to condemn the One who was not only innocent, but absolutely perfect.

Of the six trials recorded throughout the Gospels, two were held before Pontius Pilate, where Scripture declares that Jesus testified the “honorable confession,” 1Ti 6:13. The first trial was held before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest. After Judas made a deal with the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver, he began looking for an opportunity to betray Him, Joh 18:2-4, *Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place; for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. Judas then, having received the Roman cohort, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, “Whom do you seek?”* He knew He was about to be terribly treated, but He did not shrink away from the plan of the Father.

Joh 18:5-10,12-14 continues, *“They answered Him, ‘Jesus the Nazarene.’ He said to them, ‘I am.’ And Judas also who was betraying Him, was standing with them. When therefore He said to them, ‘I am,’ they drew back, and fell to the ground. Again therefore He asked them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ And they said, ‘Jesus the Nazarene.’ Jesus answered, ‘I told you that I am; if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way,’ that the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, ‘Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one.’ Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave’s name was Malchus... So the Roman cohort and the commander, and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.”*

Annas was not a judge, therefore, this was an illegal trial. Annas was a political leader of Jerusalem. He was a very wealthy and powerful man who was engaged in criminal activities connected with every system of corruption in Jerusalem. And he is the one who is about to judge whether our Lord is guilty or innocent. Those who brought the Lord to trial were all self-righteous

and religious—the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, who the members of the Sanhedrin, the religious organization around which all Judaism was centered. Annas, the most religious of them all, approved this trial, and following the counsel of Caiaphas, he said, in effect, “Take Him in and kill Him!” Joh 18:14. The first trial alone is filled with more injustice than we have ever faced. Is it any wonder that a few days earlier, our Lord had said in Mat 23:23, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others!”*

From the palace of Annas, our Lord was taken to the palace of the high priest Caiaphas. The second trial is described for us in Mat 26:57, *“And those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.”* Think of how fair this trial one must have been, when Caiaphas was the one who had said, *“It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation do not perish,”* Joh 11:50. Caiaphas knew that Rome was preparing to demand that the lawlessness in Palestine be rectified by the death of a culprit. Therefore, he advised that it was better for one man to die than all of them losing their power and wealth. The Sanhedrin therefore, would try to palm off Jesus as a scapegoat. The perfect Son of God is to be presented as a master criminal by the criminals themselves.

Jesus was already considered guilty, and now we see the wheels of injustice grind on our Lord Jesus Christ, Mat 26:59-60a, *“Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death. And they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward.”* At least two eyewitnesses of the same act were required, Deu 19:15. All they needed to draw an indictment against the Lord was two people to agree in their lies. This was the greatest liars’ club that has ever existed. But no two of them were able to agree.

1. The trial was held at night, in violation of Jewish jurisprudence, Mat 26:31,34. They were in a hurry, because the next day was the Passover, and they had to get their dirty work out of the way.
2. There was no defense attorney.
3. The court also sought false witnesses.
4. The court was prejudiced and even violent.

Finally, two of them managed to agree, Mat 26:60b-62, *“But later on two came forward, and said, ‘This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days [Joh 2:18-21].’”* And the high priest stood up and said to Him, *‘Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?’* The Lord did not answer back! As lie after lie was spoken against Him, the uniqueness of Christ should have been apparent to all who watched this blatant injustice. In fact, from their own Bible they should have been reminded of Isa 53:7, *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.*

The Lord Jesus Christ put the entire matter in the Father’s hands, according to Rom 12:19. Every moment the Lord Jesus lived, He lived in the moment-by-moment Sabbath, the faith-rest life. He would continually cast His cares upon the Father, and He would leave them there. He quietly rested in the Father’s promises and held His peace, Mat 26:63-67, *“But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, ‘I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, ‘He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? [Caiaphas took a clear statement of fact, which in no way condemned our Lord, and said it was a confession of guilt.] What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death!’”* [The penalty of blasphemy was death.] *Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him.”*

Now the violence begins. They spit in the face of the Son of God! They abused and insulted the One who would hang on Calvary's Cross and be judged for every sin they ever committed, including spitting in His face! They whipped and punched Him without mercy, Isa 52:14, "*His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.*" When they were through with this second trial, Jesus no longer looked human. His face was destroyed and His eyes swollen. Yet He stood fast, His eyes set on the Cross, and our salvation.

THE TRIALS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, PART 2

John 18, Luke 23

03/14/04

This past week we began to look at the six trials of our Lord Jesus Christ and how they relate to our main passage in Phi 4:8 which says, *"From now on, members of the Royal family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right]...let your mind dwell on these things."*

There are many injustices in life, and if you let your mind dwell on those things, they will drive you crazy. As you go forward in the spiritual life, you need to let your mind dwell on what is just and fair. People will be unfair, but you must not lower yourself to their level. No greater example exists for us of one being just and righteous while being treated unjustly than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the only celebrity of the Christian faith.

Except for one short interrogation, the six trials He endured were unjust in every way. The One on trial was the only One who never committed one act of personal sin. The number six in Scripture represents humanity, and the entire human race was involved in these trials in some way (Heb 12:2-3).

The day our Lord and Savior died was a day like none other, a day filled with paradoxes. It was the darkest day in the history of time, and yet it was the brightest of all days. The injustices that nailed Him to the tree satisfied the justice of God. The evil acts of men who formed a murderous plot to end his life, proved that they were mere instruments in the hand of a sovereign God whose purposes were being carried out precisely as He planned them, Isa 53:10, Pro 16:4.

Luke begins to record the abuse our Lord suffered in Luk 22:63-64, *"And the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him, and beating Him. And they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, 'Prophesy, who is the one who hit You?'"* By the time they finished beating and scourging Him, his image was no longer recognizable as a man, Isa 52:14. No one else could have stood up to this punishment without fainting or even dying. Luk 22:65 continues, *"And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming."* Ironically, they had brought him before the Sanhedrin to accuse Him of blasphemy.

Our Lord was then escorted to the second trial, before Caiaphas the high priest, whose one agenda was to *find* Him guilty (not *prove* him guilty). This was another illegal trial, held at night and based on false witnesses with prejudice and violence in the court. Any reasonable court of law would have already thrown out the case, but the Lord Jesus Christ was now a pawn in the hands of an unjust, prejudiced crowd and a religious system determined to take Him to the Cross. The scene grows even uglier in Luk 22:66, *"And when it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber..."*

The first two trials, before Annas and Caiaphas, were held at night illegally. This next trial was held early the next morning. It is now daylight, about 6:00 AM. Under Jewish Law, a sentence of death could never be carried out the day it was given. A night must elapse so the court might sleep on it, and perhaps their condemnation might turn to mercy. But the Sanhedrin was far from keeping its own regulations. Luk 22:67-68 continues, *"'If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer.'"* The Lord would not reveal His claims to those who were asking in order to *reject* rather than examine them. Silence is His answer to ingrained prejudice masquerading as honest inquiry. However, He gave them the supreme sign of His Messiahship in Luk 22:69-71, *"'But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.' And they all said, 'Are You the Son of God, then?' And He said to them, 'Yes, I am.' And they said, 'What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.'"*

They will now parade him before Pilate for a fourth trial, where Scripture declares that Jesus witnessed an “honorable confession,” 1Ti 6:13. Pilate served as governor of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36, and his biography is saturated with brutality. Multiple revolts that had broken out during his term had brought him under investigation by the Roman government. He lived in Caesarea but was visiting Jerusalem because it was Passover; he was there, strangely enough, to maintain law and order. He would later be banished to Gaul where he would commit suicide. One wonders if he was haunted by this decision concerning Jesus, which went against his better judgment.

In Luk 23:2, *“They began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this man misleading our nation [lie] and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar [lie], and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King [another lie].’”* This is an outright lie, Mat 22:21, *“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”* In the first two trials, they accused our Lord of blasphemy; however, they now invent a new accusation they hope will work with the Romans. Until now, nothing was said about tribute to Caesar.

In Joh 18:28, *“They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium [hall of judgment], and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.”* This was the day the memorial supper, the Passover, would be eaten, representing *the death of their Messiah!* Eating the lamb was a picture of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet they had rejected Him. Therefore, the Jews took Jesus to the Roman governor in an attempt to avoid Jewish law, which forbade them from trying someone in court on a holy day. Joh 18:29-30 continues, *“Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, ‘What accusation do you bring against this Man?’ They answered and said to him, ‘If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.’”* They have no evidence against Jesus.

Pilate was the only one who gave Jesus Christ an objective hearing. In Joh 18:31-32, *“Pilate therefore said to them, ‘Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.’ The Jews said to him, ‘We are not permitted to put anyone to death’ [Pilate had the discernment to observe the innocence of Jesus, but not the character to free Him.], that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.”* Our Lord knew exactly what they would do to Him, but He still pressed on, for you and for me, Heb 12:2, *“who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.”* Here was the King of the Jews about to be subjected to the lowest form of Gentile punishment.

In Luk 23:7-8, the Lord is sent to King Herod, and the fifth trial begins: *“And when he [Pilate] learned that He belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time. Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.”*

Herod viewed Jesus as a mere entertainer, and had wanted to meet Him for a long time, and now he gets his chance, Luk 23:9-11, *“And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.”* The Lord Jesus Christ treated him with the ultimate insult, not in rebuking him, but in simply ignoring him, which must have infuriated Herod, Luk 23:11, *“And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, they dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.”*

Here comes a sixth trial, and by now, Pilate is beside himself, Luk 23:13-16,18-25, *“And Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, ‘You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him.’ [This is the only honest judgment during these six unjust trials.] No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. I will therefore punish Him and release Him.”*

We see John’s account in Joh 18:33-34, *“Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus, and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered, ‘Are you saying this on*

your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" Pilate expressed his frustration when asking the first question; his second question seeks information, Joh 18:35, *"I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me; what have You done?"* This received a direct answer, Joh 18:36, *"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.'"* Jesus Christ would not have a kingdom of this world until Satan's defeat at the Cross. He will still have an earthly kingdom, but it would not be established on earth at that time. The physical kingdom of Christ on earth awaits His Second Advent at the beginning of the Millennium. (Today, He has a regenerate kingdom of Church-age believers, known as the Church or the Body of Christ.) Therefore, He states that His kingdom is not of this world.

Joh 18:37-39 continues, *"Pilate therefore said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, I find no guilt in Him. But you have a custom, that I should release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?"* Realizing that Jesus was innocent, Pilate would make it possible to release an innocent Person, get himself off the hook, and help the religious leaders save face. However, in Luk 23:18-25, *"But they all cried out together, saying, 'Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!' (He was one who had been thrown into prison for a certain insurrection made in the city, and for murder.) And Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept on calling out, saying, 'Crucify, crucify Him!' And he said to them the third time, 'Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; I will therefore punish Him and release Him.' But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. [Knowing he was already under investigation and that the release of Jesus would incite yet another riot, Pilate gives in.] And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand should be granted. And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will."*

Our Lord was born at a time when the Jews executed criminals by stoning, however all the prophecies stated He would be crucified. Consider the odds of the Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

- The blood on both doorposts and over the door prophesied the Cross, Exo 12:7, fulfilled in 1Co 5:7
- The brazen serpent lifted up in Num 21:9 was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ in Joh 3:14, 12:32; Heb 12:2.
- The mocking and contempt of our Lord's enemies in Psa 22:6-8 was fulfilled in Luk 23:35.
- His hands and feet being pierced in Psa 22:16 was fulfilled throughout the Gospels, as in Mat 27:31, Mar 15:24.
- The casting of lots for His garments in Psa 22:18 was fulfilled in Mat 27:35.
- The prophecy that not one of His bones would be broken was written in Psa 34:20, and fulfilled in Joh 19:34-36.
- The betrayal of Judas Iscariot in Psa 41:9 was fulfilled in Luk 22:47-48.
- The prophecy of the gall and vinegar in Psa 69:21 was fulfilled in Mat 27:34.
- The physical abuse and humiliation of Jesus in Isa 50:6 was fulfilled in Mat 26:67.
- His dying for our sins in order to save us was prophesied in Isa 53:5, and was fulfilled throughout the entire New Testament, as in Rom 5:6-8.
- His silence as He approached the Cross in Isa 53:7 was fulfilled in Mar 15:4-5.
- His crucifixion in Isa 53:12 was fulfilled in Luk 23:33-34.
- The piercing of His side in Zec 12:10 was fulfilled in Joh 19:34.

- The nailing of His hands and feet in Zec 13:6 was fulfilled in Joh 20:27.

These Jewish leaders, under the control of Satan, would not let up until Jesus was removed from the scene. Religion became the champion of a despicable criminal rather than the perfect, matchless Son of God. Convinced of the innocence of Jesus, Pilate still attempts to release Him. His second attempt is recorded in Mat 27:24-25, *And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children!"* He had just declared again the innocence of our Lord under Roman law, and in a symbolic act he called his servant to bring in a bowl of water, and he washed his hands publicly in front of the entire crowd. The custom of washing hands indicated that the accused was innocent. Pilate cast a vote that all could see and understand (Deu 21:6-9). Some 30 years later on the pavement on which Pilate washed his hands, the Romans would crucify 36,000 Jews. The historian Josephus vividly describes the horrors of what happened on this very spot. Little did the Jews realize what they were saying in Mat 27:25, *"His blood be on us and on our children!"*

The events that followed are beyond our imagination. We cannot imagine the physical torture. He drags the crossbeam along the Via Dolorosa, His route from Pilate's judgment hall to Calvary. Most of the artists who have painted Jesus Christ on the Cross understood nothing of His cruel treatment. They have portrayed a skinny figure with scrawny shoulders and bony frame, appearing weak and half-starved. In reality, Jesus Christ was the most powerful Man who ever lived! To receive those severe blows and still survive, he had to be extremely strong. To be accurate, a painting of Jesus Christ as He hung upon the Cross should depict a powerful body and neck beneath a bloodied, beaten mass for a face, His features completely mangled, Isa 53:5.

In spite of all the injustice and brutality He endured, He is still caring for others, Luk 23:27-28,32-33 *"And there were following Him a great multitude of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him. But Jesus turning to them said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'... And two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. And two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left."* This was capital punishment of the worst degree—completely naked, in this terrible twisted position, continually pushing Himself up to breathe, and pulling against the spikes in His hands and feet. Like the thousands of lambskins stretched in the mid-morning sun that day in preparation for the Passover, so the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, lay stretched beneath the burning skies of Judea. God's Passover Lamb was there for all to see.

It was the most ghastly altar upon which any human sacrifice had ever been offered. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hung suspended between heaven and earth as the Supreme Sacrifice, atoning for the awesome burden of the sins of all mankind, making reconciliation between God and man. The worst suffering did come until, in Mat 27:46, *"Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"* The Father turned His back as His Son bore the sins of the entire world in that horrible moment of time, and at that same moment Satan's doom was secured. You and I were in His thoughts as He bore the sins of the human race, 2Co 5:21. Finally, in Luk 23:46, *"Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last."* The final complete ransom was paid, and then He died. Such an extreme price for our salvation calls for such extreme gratitude and obedience to our Lord.

How did He live through such punishment? *Because he had you in mind!* He was thinking of you and me, because He had to get to the Cross! He must pay the penalty of sin, which is spiritual death. He did all of this because He must be "made sin for us." His physical death did not provide salvation; it signified that *His work was finished* and established the basis for *resurrection*. What a Savior we have!

All He had to do was snap His fingers and thousands of angels would have come to His aid. He remained sinless in spite of the most intense temptations. His restraint was magnificent, for if He had ever lost His temper, there would be *no salvation*.

Joh 19:19-22 And Pilate wrote an inscription also, and put it on the cross. And it was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Therefore this inscription many of the Jews read, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and in Greek. And so the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but that 'He said, "I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

FORGIVENESS

Luke 7:36-50, Mat 18:21-35

03/21/04

Philippians 4:8 "From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right] let your mind dwell on these things."

We have begun to look at our Lord's mind was dwelling upon mistreated and tortured. His thoughts are revealed in a magnificent way in the last seven statements that He made on the Cross. When our Lord was doing His greatest work on earth, suffering on the Cross for the sins of the whole world, He was uttering some of His greatest words.

1. Luk 23:34, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
2. Luk 23:43, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."
3. Joh 19:26-27, "Woman, behold, your son! Son, behold, your mother!"
4. Mat 27:46, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
5. Joh 19:28, "I am thirsty."
6. Joh 19:30, "It is finished!"
7. Luk 23:46, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit."

At times it is very difficult for us to forgive people, and it is very easy to harbor an unforgiving spirit. However, to be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you. Forgiveness means to give up resentment, excuse a guilty party, release from payment, and forget an offense *never bringing it up again*, not even to discuss it. The ultimate expression of forgiveness is found in our Lord's words, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." The greatest illustration of forgiveness is the Cross itself, where all the personal sins of the human race were imputed to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord demonstrates His graciousness in forgiving someone who was guilty in Luk 7:36-50; verse 36 reads, "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined at the table." Simon the Pharisee was a *user*. He wanted to use Jesus to gain power with the crowds following Him. Often these meals were eaten in the courtyard, and when a rabbi was at the meal, people came in to hear his wisdom. When a guest entered such a house, three protocols were always followed. First, the host placed his hands on the guest's shoulder and gave him the kiss of peace as a mark of respect. Secondly, since the roads were dusty and dirty and they wore sandals, their feet became dirty; therefore, water was poured over the guest's feet to cleanse them. Thirdly, a pinch of sweet-smelling incense was burned or a drop of aroma of roses was placed on the guest's head as an anointing. However, none of these were offered to the Lord when He entered. Yet His attitude of grace and restoration was the same toward the Pharisees, the tax collectors, and prostitutes.

There is a sudden interruption, and a woman enters uninvited, Luk 7:37-38, "And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a prostitute; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume." She had great humility. There is no happiness for arrogant, legalistic people who are always trying to straighten someone else out.

Flowing from this woman's heart are feelings of *gratitude* in her love and praise for the Lord Jesus Christ. In the ancient world, "proper" women keep their hair up in public, but she lets her hair down to wipe away her tears from her Savior's feet. And she kisses them and pours out her precious perfume, perhaps her most valuable possession, and the Lord accepts it. He was not embarrassed in spite of her reputation. In Luk 7:39, "Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to

himself, *'If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a prostitute.'*"

The legalistic Pharisee thought to himself that Jesus could not possibly be a prophet, since He let such a person touch Him. He made two pre-judgments and both were wrong. First, he misjudged the Lord Jesus Christ by expecting Him to condemn the woman instead of forgiving her. Secondly, he misjudged the woman and her motives and her spiritual state. Rather than recognizing what a marvelous occurrence it is to see a person freed from guilt through the Lord Jesus Christ, he judges both her and the Lord. However, the Lord proves a greater discernment than knowing the sins of the woman by knowing the thoughts of Simon himself, Luk 7:40-42, *"And Jesus answered and said to him [even though Simon has not said anything out loud], 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he replied, 'Say it, Teacher.' 'A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii [a denarius is a Roman silver coin worth one day's wages], and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?'"*

Simon answers cautiously because he does not want to pronounce guilt on himself, Luk 7:43, *"Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him," "You have judged correctly."* The Lord Jesus Christ now demonstrates His grace in a magnificent way, Luk 7:44-47, *"And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon [He has his back to the Pharisee as he addresses him], 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this gracious reason [how charin] I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven [apheontai], for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."*

One who senses that he is the chief of sinners will feel under infinite obligation to love God for all that He has forgiven him. However, this Pharisee is sitting there completely unaware of the enormity of his own sinfulness. Luk 7:48-50 continues, *"And He said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven [the most wonderful words she would ever hear for all of her life].' And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?' [The others at the banquet were negative to the Gospel, as was Simon, but they had the same opportunity to believe as this woman did.] And He said [face-to-face to the woman, as He turned His back on the legalistic Pharisees], 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'" To protect her, Jesus gives her a command to go. The happiest person in the city was the one who left the courtyard that day, forgiven and free.*

1. Simon's walled-off courtyard of self-righteousness reminds us that pride paralyzes us. It deadens us to our need and numbs our feelings of gratitude toward God.
2. The sobbing woman's peace shows us that forgiveness releases us. We are happiest when we are forgiven—free of spiritual debt, guilt, and shame.
3. Jesus' acceptance of the woman tells us that faith delivers us. Because of her love for Christ, she entered the Pharisee's house to offer her sweet gift. She risked ridicule and disgrace, but she came anyway. Faith means coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing He will accept us just as we are.

The pattern of forgiveness shown by our Lord in Luk 23:34 is applied to the believer as part of the Royal Family honor code, Col 3:13. The believer actually benefits from this act of forgiveness than the one who is forgiven! Believers are *commanded* to forgive one another, Eph 4:32, and this necessary for fellowship and unity in a local assembly. Forgiving others also allows God to handle the situation, Rom 12:19. Our works are unprofitable if we hold resentment, Mat 5:23-24. If you do not forgive others, you cannot be filled with the Spirit and cannot serve the Lord. If you make others suffer and pay for what they have done to you, you will be the one who suffers and pays. We must forgive others for our prayers to be heard, Mat 6:14-15. If we ask for forgiveness we also must give it!

Refusal to forgive advances Satan's plan, as seen in 1Co 5:1-6,9-13, where a believer was committing sexual sins with his father's wife and the Corinthians were actually boasting about it: *"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst. For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?..."*

"I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."

They removed this individual from among themselves, and the result was that he repented! That is why God tells us to separate from believers who are slanderous, judgmental, and critical, and who have violated the Royal family honor code, 2Th 3:14. However, this man in Corinth had repented, but the Corinthians would not take him back into the local assembly, 2Co 2:5-11. Satan causes divisions in local assemblies by using legalistic believers to condemn others who have sinned. Healing can only take place through forgiveness. In Jam 5:15-16, the early church in Jerusalem was told to confess their faults to each other because they were experiencing sickness because they would not forgive others. This church was filled with judging and gossiping, which caused divisions, resentment, and sickness. They needed to forgive each other and be reconciled.

People of the world naturally want to be in charge, to be the master of their own fate. But the greatest Man who ever lived came not as the ruler, but as the servant, and when you come to know Him, you want to be like Him. In Mat 20:28, *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* All power comes from God. Whatever God expects you to do as an individual, He gave you the power, the grace, and the energy to do. Then, all praise goes back to God. He gave the power, he deserves the praise, and the servant readily admits that, when under the control of the Holy Spirit. This is the attitude of a *servant*, especially in the realm of forgiveness.

When it comes to the matter of forgiveness, we usually have double standards; we all want to be forgiven, yet we are not always willing to forgive. Everyone is in great need of forgiveness throughout life, because we are failures. Some are in need of being forgiven by someone they have offended, and the one offended needs to forgive; this is a continued journey that we all must travel. It is in this context that Paul writes in 2Co 2:4-7, *"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree, in order not to say too much, to all of you. Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow."* This is in reference to the man mentioned in 1Co 5, who had an illicit relationship with a woman his father had married. Paul is saying that they should reaffirm their love for him and forgive and comfort him.

Many believers misunderstand what a gracious local assembly is. They misunderstand the grace of God and what true liberty is. Gal 5:1 bears repeating: *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."* It is strange that

believers think that carnality is liberated spirituality, when, in fact, it is the Adamic nature expressing itself according to its fleshly desires and lust.

One of our greatest tests of servant-hood in all of our life will take place in the area of forgiveness. In Mat 18:21, *“Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’”* His question is a simple one: what are the limits to forgiveness? The scribes and rabbis taught that if a person sins against you, forgive him three times, so Peter goes for seven. Our Lord responds in Mat 18:22, *“Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”* True forgiveness is limitless.

Throughout life, you will have an infinite number of occasions to apply forgiveness. As long as you live, someone will offend you, or you will be offending someone else! We need to have an infinite capacity to forgive. When God calls on a member of his kingdom to forgive, He is not calling on him to renounce or give up a “right,” because in reality he has no right in the matter at all, as illustrated by the Lord’s parable in Mat 18:23-25, *“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle them, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents [more money than a slave would ever see]. But since he did not have the means to repay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.”*

Under the customs of the ancient world, if someone could not pay what they owed you, you could take their property even sell them and their family as slaves, as in 2Ki 4:1, Neh 5:8. Our Lord goes on in Mat 18:26, *“The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.’”* This statement simply shows the extreme fear of the moment, which made him promise something impossible—“I will repay everything!” The king certainly realized there was no way the slave could ever repay the debt. However, what the king noticed in the heart of the slave was a spirit of humility, and in Mat 18:27, *“The lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.* Compassion is what motivates forgiveness, and God is infinitely compassionate. Three great events take place in these verses: (1) the Lord of the slave felt compassion, (2) he released him (the release of the sinner), and (3), he forgave him the debt (the forgiveness of the wrong). What a perfect analogy to the Father’s forgiveness of us as sinners!

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ when He taught His disciples to pray: *“Forgive us our trespasses, even as we forgive those who trespass against us.”* Giving and receiving forgiveness are links in the same chain. You do not adequately forgive a trespasser unless you see that it is based on how God has forgiven you. The most generous debt that will ever be paid has already been paid by our Lord.

The story takes a serious turn in Mat 18:28, *“But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii [100 days’ wages]; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’”* This is a picture of believers who want unlimited forgiveness from God, but will not forgive others! He went out from the presence of the Lord and found someone who was indebted to him. He has already forgotten the benefits he received from his Lord. The small sum is mentioned reveals how little man can offend his fellow man compared with how we have all offended God. Mat 18:29-34 continues, *“So his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?’ [The guilt laid upon him is that, having received mercy and forgiveness, he remains unmerciful and unforgiving toward others.] And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.”* This is divine discipline on the believer who is unforgiving.

This is a marvelous expression of what happens when we refuse to forgive one another. It is an accurate description of the tormenting resentment and bitterness, and the animosity of hate and envy. It is a terrible feeling when we feel the acid of resentment and hate eating away at our peace and calm. And our Lord concludes in Mat 18:35, *“So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”*

If someone has wronged you, and you do not forgive them in your heart, you have had it in the spiritual life! This is where the principle of Dan 9:9 applies: *“To God belongs mercy and forgiveness.”* To have forgiveness toward others we must know God! It is through occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ that we develop a capacity to forgive. And this means the ability to forgive *yourself* for your own wrongdoings, and forgive others for what they have done to you.

NEAR THE CROSS

Luke 23, Matthew 27

03/28/04

Whenever a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is converted, it is an amazing experience because a miracle takes place. The spiritually dead sinner is raised to eternal life; he is delivered from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, Col 1:13. The one who believes is said to be born again, 1Pe 1:3,23. He experiences a new birth, Joh 3:3, and receives the divine nature within, 2Pe 1:4. This is the experience of every converted sinner who “turns to the Lord Jesus Christ” and trusts Him as Savior. The circumstances that surround conversions vary greatly; some are surrounded by spectacular events, such as the conversion of the Apostle Paul in Act 9:1-5, while others may take place under quiet, private circumstances where no one else can see what is happening.

On of the most remarkable conversions in the entire Bible was that of the thief on the Cross in Luk 23:38-43, *“Now there was also an inscription above Him, ‘THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.’ And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, ‘Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!’ But the other answered, and rebuking him said, ‘Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ And he was saying, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!’ And He said to him, ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.’”* This was our Lord’s second statement from the Cross, and here He turned to a repentant sinner and gave him the assurance that he was going to heaven.

This was truly an extraordinary scene at Calvary. The normal custom would be to crucify the two thieves together, but they placed the Lord between the two thieves. He was *“numbered with the transgressors,”* fulfilling yet another prophecy, Luk 22:37, Isa 53:12. God had everything under control, including all the events that took place at the Cross. Our Lord was born for the transgressors, Mat 1:21, and lived for the transgressors, Mat 20:28.

The story of the salvation of the dying thief reveals the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to save mankind and His willingness to receive all that come to Him, no matter their predicament (Heb 7:25). At the time He saved this thief, He was at the lowest moment of His life—stripped of His clothing, nailed to the Cross, mocked by the crowd, and dying in agony. However, while in that terrible condition, He still reached out and saved another soul.

Both thieves could hear Him pray, in Luk 23:34, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* The Holy Spirit used that prayer to speak to their hearts. These two thieves represent the believer and unbeliever with Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and men, 1Ti 2:5. They were on either side of the Lord, so they could see the title that was on His cross, *“THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS,”* written in three languages by Pilate. The two thieves represent the fallen human race, who are all guilty before God, and the inscription above the Cross represents the unlimited atonement. The Gospel is given to all, Rom 3:23, Joh 3:15.

Both thieves could hear the crowd as it railed upon the Lord Jesus Christ. They both had equal access to Him. God always works in His providence to create the right circumstances for people to become saved. *“The Lord is not willing that any should perish,”* 2Pe 3:9. These two convicted criminals are clearly representative of the human race; they were both guilty of rebellion, murder, and stealing, and they could do nothing to save themselves, but they both had an equal opportunity to be saved by grace.

The thief admitted he feared God, admitted his guilt, admitted he deserved this punishment, admitted that Jesus Christ was innocent, and admitted that there was a life after death, an amazing confession. This presents the question for all: *“Do you believe that there is life after death? Are you prepared for it, and do you live as though there is life after death?”* No matter what success you may

achieve in life, you are just a meaningless “vapor trail” (Jam 4:13-14) that will disappear under the sin unto death, unless you have Bible doctrine as your top priority. Do you believe, like the thief on the cross, that Jesus Christ is the Lord of Paradise?

This conversion of the thief was a salvation that was wholly by grace. This man did not deserve to be saved, and he admitted it, Luk 23:40. The first man that God created became a thief; Adam stole from the tree and was cast out of Paradise. The last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, turned to a thief, and said, *“Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”*

This thief could not earn his salvation; he could not keep the Ten Commandment or any religious ritual. He simply received it by faith. He could not work for his salvation; all he could do was receive it as a gracious gift from God, Eph 2:8-9. He also knew his salvation was secure, as the Lord tells him dogmatically, “You shall be with Me.” The word of our Lord is secure and certain, Psa 119:89, *“Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.”* The thief received immediate salvation: “Today you shall be with Me.” Salvation is not a process; it is an instantaneous spiritual experience by the power of God when you put your faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was identified with this man in condemnation, and this man was identified with Jesus Christ in salvation, and this is what the Cross is all about.

All the Lord’s disciples have fled, and at this time, the crucified thief was our Lord’s only companion. This should be a comfort to us, Heb 2:11, *“For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”* It was a convicted felon with whom our Lord fellowshiped in the final hours of His life. This magnificent event demonstrates how quickly someone can be saved and their entire life turned around for eternity. This helpless criminal could do nothing for salvation; he could only believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord welcomes all those who come to Him, Joh 6:37. Heaven and hell are not so far away; one thief went to heaven, the other to hell, in just moments. Eternity lies so near to each of us.

Our Lord’s third statement from the Cross is found in Joh 19:26-27, *“When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household.”* If you and I had been in Jerusalem that Passover afternoon when the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, how near the Cross would we have stood? The Roman soldiers were there, but only because of their duty. However, four women were there, as well as the Apostle John, and they were there because of devotion to the Lord.

This passage helps us understand what it means to be “near the Cross.” If Mary Magdalene had been asked, “You are standing near the Cross, what does it mean to you?” she may well have answered, “The Cross to me is a place of redemption.” Mary Magdalene had been delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ. She is mentioned in Luk 8:2 as the woman out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons. She had been in bondage to Satan and Jesus delivered her. Mary Magdalene was not only at the Cross, but early on the morning of the resurrection, she came to our Lord’s tomb, Joh 20:1. All of us were under the power of Satan at one time in our life, and it was through the Cross that we were delivered from this power. We went from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the power of God, Col 1:13, 1Jo 4:4.

Another woman at the Cross that day was Salome, who was Mary’s sister and the mother of James and John. We remember her as the woman who came to the Lord Jesus Christ asking Him to give her two sons a throne in Mat 20:20-28. If we were to ask Salome, “What does the Cross mean to you?” she may well have answered, “The Cross to me is a place of rebuke. I stand here rebuked, because I was selfish; I wanted my sons at the right hand and the left hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I see Him, not on a throne, but on a Cross, and I am ashamed.” Her request had been a selfish one; she had forgotten the *cost* of true reward. There is no crown without a Cross; there is no wearing of the crown without the drinking of the cup. We all have something in common with Salome. Many

times, as we contemplate the Cross, we too are rebuked, because our goals and desires have been selfish and proud. Salome says to each of us, “The Cross is a place of rebuke.” Perhaps as you stand near the Cross, God rebukes your selfishness and pride, and your desire for glory without suffering.

Also at the Cross that day was Mary, the mother of Jesus. If one had asked her, “What does it mean for you to be near the Cross?” She may well have answered, “The Cross to me is a place of reward.” It is interesting to note that we find Mary at the beginning and the end of the Gospel of *John*, but the two incidents are in striking contrast. In Joh 2, Mary is attending a wedding and is involved in the joys of a feast, where the Lord displayed His power, manifested His glory, and turned the water into wine. In Joh 19, she is experiencing the sorrows of a funeral, as her Son dies in weakness and in shame. He could have exercised His power and delivered Himself, but had He done so, He would not have completed the work of salvation. He did not come to save Himself, He came to save us.

In Joh 2 Mary is speaking, but in Joh 19 she is silent. Her silence was testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If Jesus Christ was not what He claimed to be, Mary perhaps could have saved Him by pleading His case with the Romans, and telling them He was insane (as he was called in Mar 3:21). However, she kept silent, and her silence is an eloquent testimony that the Jesus Christ we worship is God—God the Son in human flesh. The Cross was a place of reward for Mary. The Lord Jesus Christ did not ignore her, but rewarded her by sharing His beloved disciple with her.

Mary should be honored but not worshiped. We are told that Mary herself said she rejoiced in God *her Savior* (Luk 1:47). Mary was saved by faith like any other sinner. We should respect Mary, because she suffered in order to bring the Savior into the world. When she was discovered pregnant, she began to suffer shame and reproach immediately. She was misunderstood and slandered. She was married to Joseph, a poor carpenter, and lived in poverty. They had to flee from Bethlehem and escape the sword of Herod. She rejoiced that her child was delivered, but she must have felt the sword in her own soul when she heard that other innocent children had died.

She suffered because of where He died, publicly on a Cross, and naked, with many people passing by. And there Mary stood, feeling the sword go through her soul. Jesus saw her, and assured her of His love, as He always does. You may be going through your own personal Calvary experience; you may be standing by and suffering intensely in your present circumstances, but the Lord Jesus Christ will always assure you of His love. When He said to His mother, “*Woman, behold, your son!*” and to John, “*Behold, your mother!*” He was establishing a new relationship. He was saying in effect to Mary, “I am going to go back to heaven, therefore, you and I must have a whole new relationship. But, in order to give you peace and heal your broken heart, where the sword has pierced so deeply, I’m giving you John.” In the first three statements from the Cross, the Lord is only concerned for *others*.

To John, the Cross was a place of responsibility. Our Lord Jesus still reigned from the Cross; He was still in control and giving the orders, directing His followers and loved ones. He restored John, who had forsaken Him and fled, Mat 26:56. The Shepherd had been smitten, and the sheep had been scattered, but John came back to the Cross and was restored and forgiven!

It was not the safest or easiest place to stand; it took courage and love for John to return. The Lord Jesus restored him, and it was John who would one day write, in 1Jo 1:9, “*If we acknowledge [name and cite] our sins, He is faithful and righteous, with the result that He forgives us our sins [known sins] and purifies us from all unrighteousness [unknown sins].*” the Lord not only restored John, but also honored him: “John, I will no longer be on earth to watch over My earthly mother, so you are going to take My place. You will be a son to her.” We are to love others the way the Lord has loved us.

Once we have come to the Cross, we have a major responsibility, the responsibility of loving the Lord Jesus Christ and then living for Him and loving others. The Christian life is not an easy life, but it is a wonderful life, and easier than a sinful life! “Near the Cross” is where He wants us to be, the place of redemption. If you have never trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, you can be redeemed—simply come to the Cross by faith and trust Him.

The fourth statement heard from the Cross is perhaps the least understood of them all. It is found in Mat 27:46 and Mar 15:34, *"Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"* The first three really do not surprise us. He taught forgiveness, and He came to bring forgiveness, so we are not surprised at His words. However, the fourth statement introduces a mystery that is very difficult for us to identify with. His words were literally screamed. In this cry, the Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that God the Father, with whom He had eternal and unbroken fellowship, had to break that fellowship at this moment. This is the time when Jesus Christ *"bore our sins in his own body on the tree,"* 1Pe 2:24. This was the unspeakable agony of the Cross, the spiritual death first prophesied in Psa 22:1, *"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning."* His fourth cry indicated that He was being judged for us. God the Father had to pour out all His wrath, as a matter of justice, upon God the Son, while the humanity of Jesus Christ bore the sins of the world.

This is perhaps the saddest cry heard from the Cross. *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* is a tremendous statement that no man will ever be able to fully understand. The Lord Jesus Christ was accustomed to addressing God as His Father, as we see in His prayers. However, in this instance, He does not say, "Father," but "My God, My God." This was not because He had any doubt about his Sonship; He was simply speaking from His humanity.

This cry shows us how truly human the Lord Jesus Christ was, that he could be forsaken by God. It is hard for us to comprehend that the Lord Jesus Christ, being "Emmanuel, God with us," and His deity and humanity being permanently united in one person, could have been forsaken by God. But this is holy ground and we must believe it by faith. This is such a sacred statement that it is one of the only verses which is given in all three original languages of the Bible. He was and is the God-Man, who has been scourged, and spit upon, and who has died. All these things were made possible and also sacredly certain in order to complete the redemption of His people. It was necessary for Him to be both God's beloved Son and to be forsaken of His Father. Being forsaken was something personal to Himself. It was not the God of man to whom He appealed, but "My God, My God." It was a personal cry that came from a personal grief.

This certainly was not a cry caused by unbelief. The Lord Jesus Christ made no mistake about this, for God had truly forsaken Him. When He said, *"Why have You forsaken me?"* he spoke infallible truth. He knew what he was saying, and He was right in what He said. And not many moments after this, He shouted "with a loud voice" His victorious proclamation that *"It is finished,"* and passed from the conflict of the Cross to His coronation. His courageous spirit overcame his physical weakness.

God did forsake His Son, but He loved Him as much when He forsook Him as He always has, Isa 53:10, *"But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief, if He would render Himself as a guilt offering."* The Father was not angry with Him personally, nor did He consider Him unworthy of His love. Yet He did forsake Him. The Lord Jesus Christ was not only left all alone by His friends, but also by His Father.

It is terrible for those in Hades to be without God, but they are so hardened that they are incapable of knowing the beauty of a relationship with God, from whom they are separated forever. But how different was the case of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross! He knew, as no man could ever know, what separation from God means. None of us know the presence of God as Christ did; no believer has ever enjoyed the love of God as He did, nor pleased His Father as He did, Joh 8:29, Mat 3:17. Our Lord had enjoyed the love of God to the fullest, and now He had lost the conscious enjoyment of that precious love. The Lord Jesus Christ loved God with all His heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, as you and I have never yet been able to do.

The love of Christ towards his Father was endless, and so for the light of His Father's face to be taken away from Him, was more dark and terrible than we will ever know. There was absolute purity in Christ's nature, 1Jo 3:5, 1Pe 2:22. Think of the perfect Holy Son of God, who fully agreed with His

Father in everything, realizing that the Father had, for good and sufficient reasons, turned away His face from Him. This was the only solution: Jesus Christ was forsaken of God because we deserved to be forsaken of God. He was there, on the Cross, in our place.

As the sinner, by reason of his sin, deserves not to enjoy the favor of God, so Jesus Christ, standing in the place of the sinner, and enduring that which would vindicate the justice of God, had to come under God's judgment. We as the sinners would have come under this judgment, if Christ had not taken our place. He was forsaken so that you and I would never be, Heb 13:5, *"for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,'"* Since He, for a little while, was separated from His Father, we can now boldly claim in Rom 8:35, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"* and in Rom 8:39, *"Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

THE GREAT MYSTERIES SURROUNDING THE CROSS

Psalm 22
04/04/04

Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke wonderful and powerful words while on the Cross, and the fourth statement He made from the Cross is perhaps the least understood of them all. It is found in Mat 27:46 and Mar 15:34, where Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, *“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”* that is, *“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”*

We have seen the first three statements from our Lord on the Cross and they really do not surprise us: (1) *“Father, forgive them; for they know what they do,”* Luk 23:34. He came to bring forgiveness. (2) *“Today you will be with me in paradise,”* Luk 23:43. He came that we might be forgiven, Mat 5:10. (3) *He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son! Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!”* Joh 19:26-27. Our Lord fully obeyed the Law in His life and in His death, Mat 5:17. In contrast, our Lord’s fourth cry introduces a mystery that is very difficult for us to identify with, Mat 27:45-47, *“Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ And some of those who were standing there, when they heard it, began saying, ‘This man is calling for Elijah.’”*

These words, found in *Matthew, Mark, and Psa 22*, were screamed over and over again. The Greek verb *ebosen* means crying out for help. The prophecy in Psa 22 gives us even more insight into what was going through our Lord’s mind; it has been rightfully called the Crucifixion Psalm, and it begins with the phrase, *“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”* and ends with the phrase, *“It is finished,”* or *“He has performed it.”*

This Psalm is an insight into our Lord’s darkest hours and a record of His dying words, and takes us deep into the horrors of the Cross. It shows us the fruits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His passion in the establishment of His kingdom among men. There is no more accurate expression of our Lord’s thoughts and feelings during the awful six hours on the Cross.

In Psa 22:1 we read, *“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.”* This was quoted by our Lord in Mat 27:46, and it was a cry that caused the Jews to mock but the elect angels to rejoice. Psa 22:2 states the unanswered prayer of our Lord on the Cross: *“O my God, I cry out by day [the first three hours on the Cross, 9 A.M. to 12 noon] and then by night there is no silence for Me [the continued cry of our Lord during the darkness that surrounded the Cross, from 12 noon to 3 P.M., as He was being judged for our sins].”*

Psa 22:3 reveals why God the Father forsook the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross: *“You are Holy. You who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.”* God the Father was imputing our sins to His Son and judging them from His Holiness, therefore, He could not answer His Son’s plea. In Psa 22:4-5, our Lord says, *“Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried out to You in prayer and were delivered; they trusted You and were not disappointed.”* Of all the ones who ever trusted in God, He would be the only one to be forsaken by God. We have the promise that we will never be forsaken, Heb 13:5.

Why did God the Father forsake the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross? The reason is given in Psa 22:6, *“But I am a worm and not a man. A reproach of men, and despised by the people.”* He was being crushed for our sins. The Hebrew word *tola* refers to the worm that was crushed to make red dye for the robes of kings and aristocrats. The very people who would once have crowned Him have now condemned Him; the very ones who benefited from His cures now despised Him, Psa 22:7, *“All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head.”* These gestures of contempt and hatred came to pass in Mat 27:39-40. Priests and people, Jews and Gentiles, soldiers and civilians, all

united together to hurl abuse at Him, mocking Him while He was dying for those very sins. Which makes you wonder the most, the cruelty of man or the love of the Savior?

Psa 22:8 reads, *“Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”* This was fulfilled in Mat 27:41-43. Our Lord’s prayer was heard by all who were there, but they did not understand that He was bearing our sins in His own body on the Cross (2Co 5:21). He was our substitute; He was taking our place.

We then read in Psa 22:9,11-13,15-21, *“Yet Thou art He who didst bring me forth from the womb; Thou didst make me trust when upon my mother’s breasts... Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me [Mat 27:1]. They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion [Mat 26:59-60]. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within me [Luk 22:44]... My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws [Joh 19:28]; and Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet [Zec 12:10]. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots [Mat 27:35]. But Thou, O Lord, be not far off; O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance. Deliver my soul from the sword, my only life from the power of the dog [the Gentile Romans]. Save me from the lion’s mouth; and from the horns of the wild oxen Thou dost answer me.”*

The “lion’s mouth” refers to Satan, 1Pe 5:8. The devil as the “roaring lion” attacked the Lord Jesus Christ unlike any other man, with a rage like never before. Never was the devil so determined to destroy a soul, and he threw everything the kingdom of darkness had at Him. The Lord Jesus Christ had said that this was the hour of the power of darkness, Luk 22:53.

Where Satan did his worst, Jesus Christ did His best. The Cross is where the adversary was stripped of his power. The Lord Jesus Christ annulled the rights of the evil one to accuse and enslave us, Rev 12:10-11. This Psalm proclaims in Psa 22:31, *“They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it.”* It is declared that all the ends of the world shall remember and bow to the Lord.

At least three mysteries are wrapped up in this cry, *“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”* If we understand something of these mysteries, we can better understand what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us.

We begin with the *darkness* around the Cross. From noon until 3:00 in the afternoon, darkness was over all the land. This was not a sandstorm or an eclipse; it was a supernatural darkness sent by God the Father.

First of all, this was the darkness of *sympathy*. The Creator, in His humanity, was dying on the Cross, and all of creation was suffering with Him. When the first man and woman sinned, they affected the entire creation. They had dominion over all the earth, Gen 1:26, and creation itself suffered in their sin. God did forgive their sin, but there were still consequences, Rom 8:19-22, *“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility [condemned to frustration], not of its own will [not because of an intentional fault on its part], but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption and enter into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”* All of creation is in pain, awaiting the coming of the Creator, who will set creation free.

When the Lord Jesus Christ died, He did redeem creation. His crown of thorns was symbolic of His taking our sins to the Cross. Thorns are used to symbolize the curse of mankind and nature at the time of the Fall, Gen 3:18, Rom 8. The thorn is a symbol of man’s negative volition toward God, as well as the power of Satan, as in 2Co 12:7. Jesus Christ wore a crown of thorns on the Cross and that

signified that He was made a curse for us, Mat 27:29; Mar 15:17; Joh 19:2 cf. Gal 3:13; 1Pe 2:24. Creation, as it were, wrapped the darkness of sympathy around the Creator as He died for our sins.

This darkness at the Cross was also the darkness of *gloom*. The just was dying for the unjust, 1Pe 3:18; the innocent Lamb of God was dying for guilty sinners. The book of *Exodus* records the plagues that God sent upon Egypt; the ninth plague was *three days of darkness*, a darkness so thick it could be felt, Exo 10:21-23, and the tenth was the *death of all the first-born males* in Egypt, Exo 12:34. There was darkness over Egypt before that final judgment, the death of the firstborn, and the Passover. God's only Son went through three hours of darkness before His death. Our Lord's death on the Cross was a very solemn, serious, holy event. On the Cross, He entered into outer darkness for us, to save us from that darkness. We, as believers, have the power to save others as well, "snatching them out of the fire," Jud 1:23, and from a place of torment, Luk 16:28, where desire is never met, Luk 16:24, unspeakable misery, Mat 25:41, and where the conscience never dies and the fire is never quenched, Mar 9:44. This is why 2Co 6:2 says, "*Now is the time of acceptance; now is the day of salvation.*" Now is the moment to be prepared for eternity by personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, this darkness surrounding the Cross was a darkness of *secrecy*. Jesus Christ was accomplishing a work that He alone could accomplish. On the Day of Atonement the high priest would enter the Temple *alone* to perform His task before God. When Jesus Christ was on the Cross during those three hours of darkness, He was carrying on an eternal transaction with His Father alone. He was finishing the work that He came to do, Joh 17:4.

Perhaps an even greater mystery is the *loneliness* on the Cross. The Lord Jesus Christ was gradually enveloped by a deeper and deeper loneliness during His final hours on earth. After Judas left to betray Him, He took the 11 to the Garden of Gethsemane. Three entered into the garden with Him, but they fell asleep. Eventually, they all forsook Him and fled. Only after He had suffered alone did the Apostle John come back. Men forsook Him, but the Father was with Him at this time (Joh 8:29, 16:32). But at the Cross the Father left Him, resulting in the utter loneliness of the Savior on the Cross.

He was lonely because He was forsaken by the Father. Sin isolates man and separates man from God, and even separates a man from himself through guilt. Adam and the woman hid themselves because of the loneliness of sin, Gen 3:10. But God has never forsaken you. The Son of God was forsaken by the Father that we might never be forsaken. He went through the darkness that we might live in the light. He endured unspeakable loneliness and isolation. That is what "hell" is—eternal loneliness and eternal isolation.

Another great mystery surrounding our Lord's fourth cry is the *blindness* before the Cross. There were many onlookers standing before the Cross. They heard Him cry out, "*My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?*" but they were spiritually blind, Mat 13:13-16. And they kept saying in Mat 27:47, "*This man is calling for Elijah.*" But He was not calling for Elijah; He was quoting Psa 22:1. They did not recognize the fulfillment of prophecy before their very eyes. They were blind to the Scriptures, blind to the Savior, and blind to their own sin.

The love upon the Cross is also a mystery we will never fully comprehend. The Lord's cry points to His infinite love for us. On the Cross, He wept, bled, and died; He died spiritually, being forsaken of God, and then He died physically. Was there ever any greater love than this, that the Prince of life and glory should condescend to this shame and death? Yet this is how He lived and this is how He taught us to live. We are called to suffer for Him. We are to take up our Cross, thankful that we are permitted to bear it.

Our Lord's fifth cry on the Cross can be identified by one word—suffering. In Joh 19:28, "*After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty.'*" It is amazing to realize how the Lord Jesus Christ loved the Scriptures and

how His life centered around them. The first great lesson from this fifth utterance from the Lord's lips is the *importance of the Word of God*.

The thirst of Jesus indicates His humanity, for deity does not thirst. Deity could not suffer the penalty of sin. Jesus Christ is undiminished deity and true humanity in one Person forever, but it was only His human nature that could pay the price for our sins and experience death. This statement "*I thirst*," immediately followed the three hours of darkness, during which God the Father had withdrawn from the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, this cry reveals the intensity of what He had suffered, and the awful severity of the conflict through which He had just passed.

Even though His sufferings were like no other, His expression of thirst was not a mere desire for the relief of His body. There was a far higher purpose that caused Him to open His parched lips. This is made clear in Joh 19:28, "*After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty.'*"

The very fact that He did now "thirst" reveals His perfect submission to the plan of God. The One who made water flow from the smitten rock for the refreshment of Israel in the wilderness (Exo 17:6) still had the same power now, on the Cross. He could have satisfied His own thirst at any time, but that was not the Father's plan. The One who turned the water into wine by a word from His lips, could have spoken the same word of power here, and instantly met His own need. But we read in Heb 5:8, "*Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.*" Why, then, did He hang there with parched lips? Because it was written that He should thirst, Psa 22:15, 69:21. He knew Heb 10:7, "*Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.*" He knew that the Scripture had said in Psa 22:15, "*My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws*"; and in Psa 69:21, "*They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*" He came here to do God's will, and He performed it perfectly and completely. In dying, as in living, the Lord Jesus was in total submission to the authoritative Word of the living God.

In Joh 19:29-30 we read, "*A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth.*" The Lord simply said, "I thirst." And the vinegar is extended and the prophecy is fulfilled. Notice our Lord's extreme self-control under the most horrifying circumstances. Thirst represents the result of sin, Luk 16:24. He had hung on that Cross for six hours, and had passed through unparalleled undeserved suffering, nevertheless His mind was perfectly clear and His memory entirely unimpaired. He had before Him, with perfect accuracy, the complete truth of the Word of God, and He overlooked nothing, proving that He was superior to all circumstances!

The Lord had refused the first drink He was offered in Mat 27:34, "*And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink.*" Vinegar and gall were commonly given to criminals to deaden their pain, but our Lord refused. Gall was a bitter poison that would accelerate the victim's death, and He knew it would have deadened His senses and hindered His ability to fulfill the plan of God with a clear mind. Later, He accepts a drink of sour wine in Joh 19:29-39 and Mat 27:48, "*And immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink.*" Here He accepted the wine in obedience to His Father's will.

The power to suffer for another, the capacity to be self-denying and to accomplish some great work for God should be sought after. The One who said in Joh 7:37, "*If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink,*" was Himself thirsty. When we hear the Lord say, "I thirst," we see three portraits of Christ. We see (1) the suffering of the Son of Man, (2) the obedience of the Servant of God, and (3) the love of the Savior for sinners. Jesus Christ, God Almighty, was also truly man, 1Jo 1:1-3. Jesus was born as a baby, and grew up as a child and a youth. He ate and drank and became weary. He felt pain, He

wept, and He died. All these experiences belong to humanity. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled, Heb 7:26.

When the suffering Son of Man was on the Cross, He felt the depths of both physical and spiritual suffering, yet He was in perfect control of His faculties; He did not seek to escape pain in any way. When our Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin, He refused to be influenced in any way by strong drink; He remained in full control of His senses at all times. Therefore, He was able to empathize completely with us, to identify with our pain and our need, Heb 4:14-16. Therefore, we are able to “come boldly to the throne of grace.” We can come to the One who understands exactly how we hurt and how we feel. He knows the burdens we are carrying and the pain we are enduring. As the obedient servant of God, our Lord said, “I thirst,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

The loving Savior of sinners was thirsty because of His physical agony. But He had just come through those three hours of darkness when the sun had veiled its face, and He was separated from His Father. The Lord Jesus Christ, in that time of darkness, had cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” When the Lord Jesus was made sin, when He completed that great transaction for our salvation, He endured our “hell” for us.

He was smitten on the Cross that we might have the water of life, and there will be no thirst in heaven. The Lord Jesus thirsted on the Cross that we might never thirst. When you place your faith and trust in Him, He will satisfy your need, and you will never thirst again.

THE VICTORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

1 Peter 3:18-22, Hebrews 2:9-17

04/11/04

Our Lord's final cry from the Cross is recorded in Luk 23:44-46, "And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun being obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last."

You are not prepared to live unless you are prepared to die. The lives of so many revolve around a struggle against death and the fear of dying. The Lord Jesus Christ tasted death for us all, Heb 2:9, and broke the power of death, Heb 2:14-15. Death will inevitably come; it is an appointment that we all will keep, and only God knows the time. And as believers, we can have complete confidence concerning the day of our physical death, 2Co 5:6,8.

Our Lord confronted death, which was the last enemy, in all its sorrow, trial, pain, and finality, 1Co 15:26, "*The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*" In Luk 23:46 He said, "*Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.*" He died confidently because He had the Father's presence and the Father's promise. In this last statement our Lord quoted part of Psa 31:5, which reads, "*Into Thy hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast ransomed me, O Lord, God of truth.*" This Psalm is an Old Testament promise, which the Lord Jesus Christ applied to Himself. He does not continue with "Thou has ransomed me," because He was never in any need of redemption. When He died, He claimed God's Word and entrusted Himself to the Father. He lived by God's Word, and when you have lived by God's Word, you can die by God's Word.

This is the same assurance that we can experience—confidence in death, which can only come from the Word of God. When He came to the conclusion of His work, Jesus Christ was no longer in the hands of sinners; He was in the Father's hands. He died confidently because He was in the Father's hands, Psa 31:8,15.

Our Lord died confidently and willingly, Joh 10:17-18. No Old Testament sacrificial animal ever died willingly, but the Lord Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for us. Before He did so, He forgave His enemies, gave salvation to a repenting thief, cared for His mother, and finished the work God gave Him to perform. He had no regrets in His dying moments. We do not know how long God will give us to live, so every day, every minute, we have is a gift of His grace. As He did, we should approach the time of our death having shared salvation with others, having been faithful in taking care of those who depend on us, and surrendering to God willingly, having finished the work that He set before us.

The Lord Jesus Christ also died *victoriously*. The work was finished, the battle was won, and when He gave up His spirit, several miracles took place. The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom, and God opened the way into the Holy of Holies, Mat 27:51. The veil was almost a foot thick and stood forty feet high, and only God Himself could rip it from top to bottom. This proved that entrance into heaven was now available for all who would believe. In Mat 27:52-53, "*The tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.*" Our victorious Lord was leading the Old Testament saints from Paradise to Heaven, and some were permitted be resuscitated, come out of their tombs, and announce it in the city. Our Lord's power over death was complete.

The Lord Jesus Christ proved Himself victorious over sin (the torn veil) and over death (the opened graves), and there was also an earthquake that shook the city. An earthquake had also taken place at Mount Sinai when God gave the Law to Israel in Exo 19:18; however, the earthquake following our Lord's death did not announce the coming of the Law, but rather its *fulfillment*. The Lord Jesus Christ died in the safest place in all the universe, in the hands of God, Joh 10:27-28, and so can we.

Our Lord's seventh and final cry can be described by the word *contentment*, Luk 23:46. Upon His physical death, His human spirit went into the presence of the Father, His soul went to Paradise in Hades, and His body went into the grave to await the glorious moment, three days later, when the body would be rejoined by the soul and the spirit, and Jesus Christ would rise from the dead, literally and bodily.

The seventh cry was the beginning of the end, yet the end was a new beginning, for Jesus Christ would arise from the grave in resurrection body, walk among men for a short time, then ascend into the presence of the Father to sit at His right hand as our great High Priest and make intercession for us forever. Note also that there is a change in His words, from "*My God, My God*" in Mat 27:46 to "*Father*" in Luk 23:46. He now addresses God the Father as "Father" because His work has been completed and He is no longer paying the penalty of sin. The Father has been propitiated by the spiritual death of His Son, fulfilling the analogy of the blood sacrifice of the Old Testament. He is now ready to dismiss His Spirit to His Father.

Jesus Christ lived and died, surrounded by the Word of God. He was the only true "original thinker," Joh 7:46, "*Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.*" He continually quoted Scripture; the majority of His expressions can be traced to the Old Testament. In His death, He was not driven beyond the ability to think; He was strong even while dying, and now He utters His final words by recalling the book of Psalms, under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He was perfectly happy as He declared, "It is finished!"

The Meaning of our Lord's Words on the Cross

1. Forgiveness for His enemies, Luk 23:34, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."
2. Salvation, Luk 23:43, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise."
3. Compassion, Joh 19:26-27, "Behold, your son!...Behold, your mother!"
4. Anguish, Mat 27:46, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
5. Suffering, Joh 19:28, "I am thirsty."
6. Victory, Joh 19:30, "It is finished!"
7. Contentment, Luk 23:46, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit."

After enduring six unfair trials and unmatched brutality, it is time for His vindication, justification, and divine support. After His physical death, His human spirit will go to the presence of the Father, Luk 23:46, His soul to Hades, 1Pe 3:18-22, and His body to the grave, Mat 12:40, 27:60. There in the tomb, some three days later, the body would be rejoined by the soul and the spirit, and the Lord Jesus Christ would be resurrected.

In 1Pe 3:18-22, we have the Champion, the only real winner in history, the only One who could win the victory, and whose victory is the greatest of all time. The fact that He became a winner for us on the Cross means that we have eternal life as those who believe in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ won the strategic victory on the Cross, and we have the privilege of winning the tactical victory by sharing in His strategic victory and advancing to spiritual maturity, 1Pe 3:18, "*For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust [the righteous One as a substitute for the unrighteous ones], in order that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.*" The word for died is *apothnesko*, which means to die by separation—a reference to our Lord's spiritual death on the Cross (2Co 5:21, 1Pe 2:24). This broke the back of Satan in the angelic conflict.

The humanity of Christ remained impeccable on the Cross; He was the "*lamb without spot and without blemish,*" as He underwent the greatest possible temptations. People were gathered around the Cross to mock and sneer at Him. They were brutal and callous, and they ridiculed Him in every way possible, as every sin in human history (including theirs) was being imputed to Him by the omnipotence of God the Father.

There are two reasons why our Lord remained the “Righteous One.” He was sustained by the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit inside the predesigned plan of God, Heb 9:14, and He used the problem-solving devices, especially sharing the happiness of God, Heb 12:2. And both of these sustaining factors are now available to us as a believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So look again at 1Pe 3:18, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous One as a substitute for the unrighteous ones [all of us], in order that He might bring us to God.” The Greek noun *adikos*, translated “unjust” or “unrighteous ones,” includes all our failures when under the control of the old sin nature. The phrase “in order that” introduces the purpose of the Cross, found in the verb *prosagage* (*pros* = face-to-face; *ago* = to bring), which means to bring us face-to-face with God. Sinful man is brought face-to-face to God with perfect righteousness by the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. If you have personally believed in Jesus Christ, you have been brought face-to-face with God, Eph 2:6, Col 1:22.

“...Having been put to death in the flesh [which Satan desperately tried to prevent], but made alive in the Spirit.” The omnipotence of the Holy Spirit had custodianship of our Lord’s human soul after His physical death, and under the custodianship of God the Holy Spirit, His soul was brought to Paradise and Tartarus, located under the earth in Hades. Our Lord’s human soul was in Hades for three days, and in Tartarus, He visited the fallen angels of Gen 6, who had sexual relations with the beautiful women of that time. These angels had been incarcerated and had not witnessed the Cross, the defeat of their leader Satan. They now knew their rebellion had failed.

1Pe 3:19 continues, *“In which [the Holy Spirit] also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison [fallen angels]...”* The Greek verb for “went” is *poreuomai* in the passive voice, which means that the Lord Jesus Christ *received transportation*. The “spirits in prison” are the angels (*beni ha Elohim*, the sons of God) of Gen 6:1ff. They were judged and incarcerated in Tartarus when the Flood came on the earth, Jud 1:6, 2Pe 2:4.

There are four compartments of Hades.

1. Paradise is where the Old Testament believers resided after their physical death, before the resurrection of our Lord.
2. Torments is the place where all unbelievers currently reside, Luk 16:23.
3. Tartarus is the current prison of the fallen angels of Gen 6.
4. The Abyss contains demons who transgressed certain rules of the angelic conflict and the boundaries of the human race.

When He arrived in Paradise, the thief who died at Calvary met Him there, as did Lazarus and others such as Abraham, Moses, and David. We read in Eph 4:8-10, *“Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.’ (Now this expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)”*

Peter goes on in 1Pe 3:20, “Who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.” The patience of God had waited 120 years, during which the world received intensive Gospel proclamation. God kept waiting under the principle that grace always precedes judgment. This verse does not refer to water baptism because those in the water were destroyed. The water that drowned the unbelieving world was also used to deliver the eight souls who were believers and also true humanity. Water was an instrument of destruction for unbelievers, but physical deliverance for believers. In 1Pe 3:21, “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh [not water], but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...”

At the moment of our salvation, the baptism of the Spirit made us members of the Royal Family of God. Each member of Noah’s family in the ark is analogous to the believer who is union with the

Lord Jesus Christ. Union with Christ delivers every Church-age believer from all divine judgment. Just as the eight were safe in the ark, so we are safe in union with Christ. Your conscience was delivered at the moment you believed in Jesus Christ as Savior, when God the Holy Spirit entered you into union with the person of Jesus Christ, making you Royal Family of God and a new spiritual species.

Our Lord's next trip was from earth to the third heaven, 1Pe 3:22, "*Who [Jesus Christ] is at the right hand of God [the Father], having ascended into heaven after angels and authorities and powers had been subordinated to Him.*" When Jesus Christ ascended, He was seated at the right hand of God the Father and received his third royal title, Rev 19:16, "*And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'*" He is now higher than all angels in His humanity.

The basics of our Lord's victorious proclamation to the fallen angels is recorded in Heb 2:9-17, "*But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. [Humanity is lower than angels, but in a resurrection body we will be higher than angels.] For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies [Jesus Christ through the agency of the baptism of the Spirit] and those who are being sanctified [Royal Family], are all from one [idiom meaning "all of the same family"], for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying [in Psa 22:22], 'I will proclaim Your name to Your family [Royal Family]; in the middle of the congregation I will sing Your praise.' And again, 'I [personification of all Church-age believers] will put my trust in Him.' And again, 'Behold, I [victorious Christ] and the children [Royal Family] whom God has given to Me.' "Since therefore the children share common blood and flesh [true humanity], He also himself, in the same manner [virgin birth], shared their humanity, in order that through death [substitutionary spiritual death] He might destroy [neutralize, render powerless] him [Satan] who has the power of death, that is, the devil. And might deliver those who, through fear of death, were subject to slavery all of their lives. For obviously, He [humanity of Christ] did not assume the nature of angels, but He did take on the seed of Abraham [new racial species of the Jew]. For this reason, He had to be made like His brethren [Royal Family] in every way, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."*

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the focal point of the plan of God and human history, the very center of the universe. At the Cross, salvation was accomplished, once for all, and the ultimate victory over sin, death, and the kingdom of darkness was won. The Cross stands for all time and eternity as the ultimate example of honor, integrity, selflessness, and the power of Bible doctrine. There are so many precious lessons we can learn about who God is and how to live our lives, from our Lord's words and His death on the Cross.

1. God can convert any evil situation into divine good, Gen 50:20.
2. Whenever someone tries to curse or destroy another believer, the Lord will turn the curse into a blessing when the believer operates in the faith-rest drill.
3. When evil comes against you, the Lord can turn it into a blessing, providing that you operate in the faith-rest drill and let Him handle the situation. You will be rejoicing (not gloating) while they are being disciplined. If you hate another believer, you hate the Lord.
4. The believer does not have to fight and defend himself; God will do that for the believer who operates in the faith-rest drill, 2Th 1:6.
5. We are also told to stop being anxious and worried and let God handle any unjust and unfair situation, Isa 35:4.
6. We are commanded never to take revenge on anyone for any reason, Rom 12:19.

7. If you are being mistreated in any situation, do not lift up your hand against another person, 1Sa 24:12.
8. If you have been robbed by another believer, do not take out your vengeance and frustration on him, but give it over to the Lord.
9. Never repay evil with evil and give someone what you think they deserve, Pro 20:22.
10. When someone has wronged you, let the Lord repay him according to his deeds, 2Ti 4:14.

Phi 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

THE RIGHT MOTIVATION AND THE POWER OF TRUE LOVE

Hebrews 4:12-13, Song of Solomon 6:7-8

04/25/04

In our study on the book of Philippians, we are noting Phi 4:8 which says so far in our corrected translation, *"From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever keeps on being true [according to doctrine], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure..."*

The phrase "whatever is pure" is the Greek pronoun *hosa* and the Greek adjective *hagna*, referring to that which is proper, pure, clean, innocent, and modest. It an adjective describing proper motivation. Motivation is what really makes people tick, and it will be the basis for the evaluation of your life at the Judgment Seat of Christ in 1Co 3:13, 2Co 5:10.

Motivation reveals what is inside the individual's heart and what is impelling or inciting his actions. Everything we do in life a certain motivation behind it. We can do things that we do not *feel* like doing, but we do it anyway because our mental attitude says we should, and this is good motivation. James put it like this in Jam 4:17, *"Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin."* Mental attitude is the key to motivation, not the feelings or emotions, and you need to guard your motivation. When the motivation is right, it will encourage, influence, and convince an individual to do what is right. The motivation behind the action is what counts, Pro 16:2, 1Co 4:5.

Motivation is something within that results in an action. Impulse, on the other hand, is an *involuntary feeling* prompting one to act; you should always check your motive with the word of God to receive divine guidance before you act. We see this in Peter, who had an impulse to stop the Lord from going to Jerusalem, Mat 16:21-23, *"From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.' But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'" Peter had a sincere impulse but he was sincerely wrong. Motivation can be a mental state or an emotional force that induces an act of volition. The Lord will test our motivation, no matter where it comes from, Psa 7:9, *"For the righteous God tests the hearts [right lobes] and the minds [emotions]."* Motivation is simply one's intention or purpose.*

The motivation behind what we do, what we give, how we serve, and what we learn, will all be evaluated. In the Christian life, the believer is either motivated by Bible doctrine in the soul and the filling of the Holy Spirit, which produces personal love for God, or he is motivated by the lust pattern of the old sin nature and Satan's cosmic system. Your attitude toward doctrine and spiritual growth determines whether or not your motivation is proper. The Word of God is the critic of motivation, Heb 4:12. There are times that the doctrine being taught hits you right between the eyes. As Joh 6:63 says, *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."* In Heb 4:12, *"The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and the intentions of the heart."*

The Word of God "pierces"; the Greek verb *diikneomai* means to cut through. Bible Doctrine cuts through the garbage, the confusion, the excuses, and the rationalization, to the innermost parts of man's being, the human soul and the human spirit. The Word of God also judges. The Greek verb *kritikos* (the origin of the English word "critic") is translated "judge." It means to critique, judge, discern, or evaluate. The Word of God will evaluate your intentions and motivations in life, as our Lord stated in Joh 12:47-48.

Heb 4:12 tells us what God's Word does, and then at verse 13 tells us the reason that it works. What is it about God's Word that, regardless of culture, age, sex, or circumstance, when it is learned and believed, always works? The Word of God universal in scope, Heb 4:13, "*And there is no creature hidden from His sight all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*" He knows everything about us, including our innermost secrets and all the mistakes we have made and are going to make for the rest of our life. When God deals with any issue, everything exposed. God's Word is able to reveal to us the true meaning behind our thoughts, words, and actions, if we listen. The Lord said to Samuel in 1Sa 16:7, "*God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*"

Evil is the source of wrong motivation, as in Psa 21:11, 1Co 10:5-6. Our Lord dealt with evil motivation in Mar 7:14-23. False motivation hinders spiritual growth. Many of God's people do the right thing but in the wrong way. They may give, serve, pray, learn, and even apply what they learn, but they do it with false motivation. You need authority to grow spiritually, and you must do it without pouting and argumentations that undermine authority, Phi 2:14. Job 17:11 describes reversionism: "*My days are past, my motivations are torn apart, even the desires of my right lobe.*"

False motivation hinders spiritual growth, and a good deed may be promoted by a bad motive. Divine motivation is the grace of God as seen in His predetermined plan, Rom 8:28,9:11; Eph 1:11,3:11; 2Ti 1:9. This plan is described by the Greek word *prothesis*, meaning a spiritual purpose, the basis of correct motivation. All divine motivation is epitomized by the one word—grace. The great issue in spiritual giving is motivation, 2Co 9:7.

A good word to remember in our spiritual life is the word "anyway." People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered—love them anyway. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives—do good anyway. If you are successful, you find false friends and true enemies—succeed anyway. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow—do good anyway. Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable—be honest and frank anyway. Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth—give the world the best you have *anyway*. The key is always your motivation, the reason *why* do you do the things you do.

The next phrase is in Phi 4:8, "*whatever is lovely,*" is translated from the Greek pronoun *hosa* and the adjective *prospBILE* in the plural. *ProspBILE* is a compound adjective made up of the preposition *pros* and the noun *phile*, which connotes personal love; therefore it refers to the areas of our life where personal love exists. Love comes in four categories for members of the Royal Family of God:

1. Love toward God.
2. Love toward right man or right woman. This is a relationship between two members of the opposite sex designed for each other by God in eternity past; Pro 18:22, 19:14; Gen 2:18,22; Ecc 9:9; 1Co 7:17.
3. Love toward friends.
4. Impersonal, unconditional love toward members of the human race. This is virtue-love described by the Greek word *agape*.

ProspBILES means face-to-face love, or those that are closes to your heart. It represents every area of your life that requires capacity to love and it relates especially to three areas of love capacity. First, there is category one love, the believer's capacity to respond to God's love, based on Bible doctrine in the soul. The command for category one love is found in many passages such as Deu 6:4-5.

What does it mean to love God? It means that you "know" Him and that you have fellowship with Him through His mind, which is the Word of God. Apart from the daily function of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine, it is impossible to love God. You can say you love God, but if you do not fellowship with Him through the consistent intake of doctrine, you do not love Him. You cannot personally love someone you do not know, and you cannot know God unless you learn about Him from a prepared pastor-teacher.

There are three categories of pastors who cannot lead their congregation to spiritual maturity. The cosmic pastor is distracted by works, crusades, or social action, being very moral, arrogant, and self-righteous. He is ignorant of the plan of God, the Word of God, and has no spiritual common sense, and does not understand the predesigned plan of God. The immature pastor, who has never learned Bible doctrine and therefore spends most of his time in the cosmic system, does nothing more than evangelize his congregation and give them little moral lectures and preaching against taboos. He cannot lead his congregation to spiritual adulthood. The adolescent pastor teaches some truth, but is distracted by various forms of promotion and high profile. He is selling his own personality rather than teaching doctrine. He visits the sick, calls on his congregation, counsels, and conducts programs; therefore he does not have the time to study. What little truth he has, is buried in his arrogance of inordinate ambition and gimmicks designed to promote his ministry and fulfill his approbation lust.

The only pastor eligible to lead his congregation to spiritual maturity is the mature pastor who through his faithful Bible teaching, personal study, and avoidance of distractions, advances in the predesigned plan of God and leads his congregation with him. He is prepared academically, understands the major issues in theology, and recognizes that the issue is not his personality but his teaching. He recognizes the principle of Joh 3:30, *"He increases, I decrease."* Since God is invisible, but He is the object of our love, we must see and love Him through Bible doctrine, as in 1Pe 1:8. After failing evidence testing six times and finally passing on the seventh time, Job said in Job 42:5, *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee."* Paul wrote in Eph 1:18, *"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."*

Your personal love for God is manifested by the way you treat members of the Royal Family, Heb 6:10, *"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name [How?], in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints."* This love requires consistency in the inhale and exhale of doctrine, and it frees the justice of God to bless you. Through your love for Him, you are set free from the bondage of materialism and lusts, and therefore you have a capacity to receive God's highest and best, 1Co 2:9. A great description of category one love is given in 1Jo 4:15-19.

Category one love, your love toward God, will give you courage and confidence as you face spiritual warfare (Jos 23:10-11) and the conflicts of life designed by Satan to defeat you as a spiritual soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. This love provides strength for adversity and pressure, Heb 11:27. Witnessing is motivated by our love for God, 2Co 5:14-21. And there is a special curse placed on believers who reject this love, 1Co 16:22.

Category two love takes place between right man and right woman. It is a relationship between two members of the opposite sex designed for each other by God in eternity past. This love refers to the body and soul relationship between a man and his right woman. We must begin by answering a question; if 1Co 7:29 says, concerning marriage, *"But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none..."*, then why should the man and woman be concentrating upon their relationship as Phi 4:8 teaches? The reason is given in 1Co 7:32-35, *"But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord."*

Marriage can be a source of distraction and therefore hinder your spiritual life which is why Peter said 1Pe 3:7, *"You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a*

weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." Category two love is a touching love, a coalescence and merging of soul and body. Therefore, sex is designed to express love in this relationship after marriage, but sex is not love.

This love will either strengthen you or destroy you; no one remains the same. The strength of *right man–right woman* love is found in Sol 8:6-7, where it is said to be stronger than death: *"Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, jealousy is as severe as Sheol; its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord."*

The soul is the place where the climax begins, and so the man must be in the soul of the woman and likewise the woman must be in the soul of the man. The right one for your life will fulfill the standards that you have in your soul. The man will give reality to the woman's dreams; the Shulamite woman said in Sol 1:13, *"My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh which lies all night between my breasts."* The man will also provide her soul stimulation, and he must be in her soul before she surrenders her body to him, Sol 8:6, *"Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death."* "Strong" is the Hebrew word *azah*, which means to protect and fortify. Once in her soul, the man for her life never leaves, and she is protected by her love and respect for her man, therefore she remains faithful. Their respect for each other motivates them both to be faithful.

Once a woman has the man that God has designed for her *in her soul*, he will always there (even though at times she'll wish she could get rid of him). She will never be satisfied with another man. If she is unfaithful, she will never be satisfied in that other relationship. The man's love for the woman and her response serve as a fortification and protection for the woman's soul and body. Each protects the other, and satisfies and fulfills the other.

Sol 8:6 continues, *"Jealousy [the great enemy of love] is as severe as Sheol."* Just as the grave robs you of a loved one, so jealousy robs you of your relationship with your loved one. *"Its flashes [a reference to true love] are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord."* "Flashes" represent the intense responses to each other. She is turned on by him, first in her soul, which carries over to her physical response. She sparks and glows around him because the right man for her life will affect even her countenance. And these flashes are *from the Lord*, not the *flesh*. This woman does not try to impress other men; she saves herself for her lover. She is not flirtatious or a tease; she was a woman of virtue.

In Sol 8:7, notice this love is a fire that cannot be put out: *"Many waters cannot quench love [cannot take the heat and the passion away], nor will rivers overflow it. If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, it would be utterly despised."* "Many waters" refers to pressures, disasters, difficulties, and even the misunderstandings. "Quench" is the Hebrew verb *kabah*, which means to extinguish, or to take the heat away. The overflowing rivers refer to the most horrible disasters of life, which cannot destroy true love. And this love cannot be bought. True love cannot be found where it does not truly exist and it cannot be hidden where it truly does. You cannot buy what God has designed! You cannot buy salvation! You cannot buy Bible doctrine! And you cannot buy the one that God has designed for your life!

This love illustrates the Lord's relationship with Israel, Jer 2:2,33; Eze 16:8,23, and with the Church, Eph 5:23-33. The highest natural form of happiness and prosperity in this life is a man finding his woman. The principle of right man–right woman was designed by God in eternity past. Therefore, there is an "opposite number" somewhere for you, by divine design. The exceptions are the gift of celibacy and the law of supreme sacrifice, as demonstrated by Jeremiah and Paul, Jer 16:2, 1Co 9:5.

Every believer under the grace plan of God will eventually meet the one that God has designed for them at the *right time* and in the *right circumstances*. Waiting on God is the providence of time. There is no benefit in meeting the one that God has designed for you unless you have waited on the Lord. This means refraining from fornication while waiting, and having a love affair with Bible doctrine. Excessive fornication destroys the capacity in the body, 1Co 6:18, *"Flee immorality. Every*

other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body." However, always remember that with God all things are possible, and there is healing process that can restore the body. It takes humility, discipline, and obedience, and depends on how much healing and recovery is necessary due to scar tissue, emotional revolt, or other handicaps. Never superimpose your own failures on the Word of God; let His Word clean the garbage out of your soul and restore you.

Fornication is accepting a cheap substitute in order to gratify an emotional or biological passion or urge. It is part of a frantic search for happiness. The solution to this temptation is found in Bible doctrine and spiritual growth. Fornication is also a part of the emotional revolt of the soul, and is disastrous to the right man-right woman relationship. Therefore, it is prohibited in strong terms in Heb 13:4, *"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge [discipline]."* However, there is always hope, even if you have failed in this area, Heb 13:5-6, *"Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?'"*

Maximum doctrine in the soul plus abstinence from premarital sex provide the basis for maximum pleasure in the sexual relationship in marriage. Daily faithfulness to Bible doctrine translates the *principle* of doctrine into the *realities* of pleasure and happiness in life. Blessing in category two love depends on maturity in the spiritual life. Under category two love, happiness is found in one person, Pro 5:15-23. It excludes the following violations of God's Word, which are promoted constantly by the kingdom of darkness: masturbation, homosexuality and lesbianism, promiscuity, and adultery, all of which violate the marriage vows.

Category two love rises above the circumstances of life and produces an exclusive happiness that sustains you and your partner, Pro 15:17, *"Better is a dish of vegetables where love is, than a fattened ox and hatred with it."* This love is protective while your partner is absent, Sol 1:13, 4:6 or present, Sol 2:4. Marriage can be an instant success, if all the factors are subject to God's will and God's timing. He gives us each an allotted time for this relationship, and you never run out of time in a right man-right woman relationship designed by God. It is only our own negative volition that can waste the allotted time.

FRIENDSHIP AND VIRTUE

Proverbs 27, 2 Peter 1:1-11

05/02/04

Philippians 4:8 (expanded translation) From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is [or keeps on being] true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation], whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

In our study of Phi 4:8, we have come to the phrase “whatever is lovely,” translated from the two Greek words *hosa prosphile*. *Prosphile* refers to those areas of your life where personal love exists. It is a compound adjective made up of the preposition *pros* and the noun *phile* (personal love). Love comes in four categories for members of the Royal Family of God.

1. Personal love toward God.
2. Love toward right man or right woman. This is a relationship between two members of the opposite sex designed for each other by God in eternity past, Pro 18:22, 19:14; Gen 2:18,22; Ecc 9:9; 1Co 7:17.
3. Personal love toward friends.
4. Impersonal, unconditional love toward members of the human race.

The first three are personal loves, and the fourth is an impersonal love with no conditions attached. This shows us why it is important to go to the original languages of the Bible to get the true meaning of a passage. We are interpreting a book written in about 11,280 Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words with an English translation of approximately 6,000 words.

The third category where personal love exists, which Phi 4:8 instructs us to dwell or concentrate upon, is category three love, which is love for friends. The simple principle here is that the smarter you are, the fewer friends you will have! Pro 18:24 warns us about trusting too many people as our true friends. True friendship is a very rare to find. You can have a friendship that is stronger than that of your immediate family. Distance and time are no object in this kind of relationship. Some of the best friends you ever have in life could be inherited from your father or mother, because category three love overlaps generations, and age is not a barrier.

Category three love is a giving love, 1Sa 18:1-4; it gives time, thoughtfulness, and material things. True friends do not try to upstage you or compete with you; they will love you as they love themselves. This is what we see in 1Sa 20:17 where Jonathan and David were true friends: “*And Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.*” Category three love is restricted to only your friends and it does not include sex, as category two love does, but rather it is based on a mutual soul rapport. A man and woman can have great friendship love, although there can be a danger of one or both of them mistaking it for category two love.

The principle of category three love is found in passages such as Pro 17:17, “*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*” True friends never stab you in the back, Pro 17:9. They never gossip about what their friends do wrong, and therefore this type of love provides a pleasant, relaxing environment. They do not use what you say against you, and they guard your privacy, and never gossip about you to others. A friend is someone who levels with you and pulls no punches; in fact, this is how a pastor is a friend to the congregation. You can always be honest with your friends, Pro 27:6, “*Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.*” Unfortunately, some people never have friends because they are arrogant and proud of their hypocrisy and their ability to deceive others.

Category three love is also outgoing and objective rather than hypersensitive and subjective. It is limited to a few true friends because it takes both energy and sacrifice to have true friends. This

energy and sacrifice is compensated by desire and capacity in the soul. Capacity for category three love through Bible doctrine in the soul is the basis for a relaxed mental attitude toward all believers. In life, you will have few true friends, but you must have a relaxed mental attitude toward all believers, including the worst kind. Category three love toward a few good friends overflows in a relaxed mental attitude toward all believers, Pro 27:9-10.

In 1Sa 18:1, *“Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.”* Notice that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David. “Knit” is the Hebrew word *qashar*, which means to tie or to be chained together. This reveals the faithfulness that they had toward one another. 1Sa 18:2-4 continues, *“And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father’s house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. [“Covenant” is the Greek noun *beriyth*, which means a soul agreement of obligation, faithfulness to each other, and sacrifice.] And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.”* The robe represented that which could be seen by others, and therefore that which represented one’s character, nobility, strength, and faithfulness to his friend. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe to symbolize that there would be no covering or hypocrisy, but total transparency in his friendship with David. The armor was a protective covering and it symbolized the fact that Jonathan would cover David at all times. The sword refers to Bible doctrine in Heb 4:12, and it reveals the fact that faithfulness is based upon Bible doctrine in the soul, not on carnality and fleshly rapport. The bow was a hunter’s and warrior’s weapon, which represented the fact that if necessary Jonathan would fight and defend his friend. The belt is a symbol of a righteous life and a faithful spirit as in Isa 11:5, *“Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.”*

Category three love can be destroyed by mental attitude sins, Job 19:19-22. It can also be ruined by verbal sins, Pro 16:28, 17:9. Loss of friendship love is part of intensive discipline, Psa 38:11, 88:18.

In category three love, true friends help sharpen each other’s appearance, character, and nature, Pro 27:17, *“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”* Just as iron is shined with another piece of iron, so love between friends shines one another’s character. True friendship is profitable for both people, Ecc 4:9-12. A true friend is never known until one is in need, and this principle holds true even when you are rejoicing and enjoying yourself! It is good to have a friend with you to share the good times. *“A joy shared is doubled, a sorrow shared is cut in half.”*

How should friends be chosen? Believers should develop friendships with those who are positive toward doctrine, 2Co 6:14 cf. Psa 119:63, *“I am a companion of all those who fear Thee, and of those who keep Thy precepts.”* Your friends reveal your character, Jam 4:4, *“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”* Friends of the world are enemies of God. Be careful of the familiar friend in whom you trust who will betray you, Psa 41:9, who will not have compassion in time of disaster, Job 6:14, who will deceive you for personal gain, 2Sa 13:3, and who contribute to causing you to fall, 2Sa 13. Be careful for those who become your friend because of what they can get from you, Pro 19:6, *“Many will entreat the favor of a generous man, and every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.”* Beware of those so-called friends who flatter you with their speech, Pro 27:14, who are friendly with you for your wealth, Pro 19:4, who forsake you and flee when you need them the most, Mar 14:50, who use you and never return the kindness that you showed them, Luk 15:16, and who turn against you, Job 19:19. The Word of God is our guiding light, not the viewpoint of the world, 1Jo 5:19, *“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”*

Continuing in Phi 4:8, we read, *“From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation] whatever personal loves exist, whatever is of good repute...”*

The final adjective in this passage is translated “of good repute,” from the Greek word *euphema* which means that which is commendable, or that which is well spoken of; this is the origin of the English word “euphemism.” (A euphemism is the act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive.) This word means that when one is being critical, it is legitimate criticism given in a gracious way. Anyone who has command responsibility has to judge and evaluate those under his command. Judging must be distinguished from evaluating people as one in authority. This is why our Lord said in Joh 7:24, *“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”*

The judging that is forbidden in the Word of God is assigning a sin (real or imagined) to another person in your conversation, and it makes no difference whether they have actually done it or not. As God said to Job in Job 40:8, *“Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?”* Sin is between the individual and the Lord. We have no right to judge, malign, or gossip. Maligning is seeing the sin and telling others, whereas gossiping is repeating something you did not see yourself.

Eph 4:29 says, *“Let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.”* Many people do not recognize that the sins of the tongue destroy your life, and out of the seven worst sins, from God’s viewpoint, three are verbal sins. Pro 6:17,19 teaches that out of the seven which the Lord hates are: *“A lying tongue... a false witness who utters lies [perjury] and a person who spreads strife among the brethren [gossip, slander, maligning, judging].”*

The self-righteous arrogance of the evil believer assumes the prerogative of replacing our Lord Jesus Christ as the presiding judge of the supreme court of heaven. We are not responsible to self-righteous people who create false standards. In fact, a favorite term used by self-righteous people is “duty” or “responsibility.” The self-righteous Pharisees thought it was their “duty” to destroy the perfect Son of God. The legalistic Judaizers also thought it was their “duty” to discredit the grace ministry of Paul and kill him. Avoid these individuals who consider it their duty to speak evil and discredit other people.

It is a double standard of arrogance to judge, slander, malign, and condemn the sins of others, while at the same time being blind to your own sins. Those with such self-vindication and self-righteousness regard it as their duty to judge others, whereas our passage says, Phi 4:8, *“From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”*

It is neither the duty, responsibility, nor prerogative of the believer to assume the role and function of Jesus Christ as the supreme court judge. It is however, the responsibility of believers to self-evaluate, and judge their own lives according to the standards of Bible doctrine, Rom 14:4,10.

All of us are the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are members of the Body of Christ, the Royal Family of God, and the evaluation of our lives is the responsibility of our Lord. In the case of criminality, that responsibility has been delegated by our Lord to the government. However, regarding another believer with contempt indicates a tremendous function of arrogance in your life because you do not know the stage of his spiritual growth. If you exercise contempt for another believer, it is inevitable that you will find some way to malign, slander, or judge him. After the resurrection of the Church, all believers will be evaluated by our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom 14:12, 2Co 5:10. This evaluation will have two aspects: (1) the rejection of all of the worthless deeds we have done, which is the shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and (2) the rewards and blessing for everything we have done to execute God’s plan.

Our study continues in Phi 4:8, *“...if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”* “If” is the conjunction *ei*, a conditional particle that introduces a *first class condition*. There are four conditional clauses in the Greek:

1. First-class condition, a statement of absolute fact (“if, and it is true”).
2. Second-class condition, a negative statement (“if, and it is not true”).
3. Third-class condition, a probable condition (“if, and maybe it is true, maybe it is not”).
4. Fourth-class condition, a statement of desire (“if, and I wish it were true, but it is not”).

The indicative mood of the verb “is” indicates a first class condition (“if, and it is true”). With the conjunction *ei*, translated “if,” we have the Greek noun *arete* (translated “excellence”), meaning virtue, which is moral goodness, or moral excellence of conformity to the laws of establishment.

Virtue is the foundation of that which is true, honorable, just, of proper motivation, and commendable. Virtue in the believer is the visible manifestation of the invisible, i.e., metabolized doctrine and the power of the Holy Spirit (whereas arrogance is the visible manifestation of Satan’s invisible cosmic system). Virtue, which is the distinctive characteristic of the Royal Family of God, can only be produced in the predesigned plan of God, and is the basis of all true happiness in life (whereas pseudo-virtue produced in the cosmic system is the basis of hypocrisy).

The arrogant believer is locked into Satan’s cosmic system with a sense of superiority, and arrogance will make anyone stupid. Ignorance of doctrine suppresses curiosity and capacity for life. If you are not curious about what God has done for you, you have no capacity for life in any area. As Solomon teaches us in the book of Ecclesiastes, there are those who seek for pleasure, success, and happiness, and there are those who have pleasure, success, and happiness searching for them, Ecc 6:2.

The arrogant intellectual type of believer often has *gnosis*, academic doctrine, but no metabolized doctrine, 1Co 8:1, “*We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.*” Failure to metabolize Bible doctrine and apply it results in ignorance of the divine plan of God. The ignorant and apostate, sincere, sweet, kind, arrogant believers are classified by the Word of God in at least nine categories. They are (1) enemies of the Cross, Phi 3:18, (2) enemies of God, Jam 4:4, (3) haters of God, Joh 15:23, (4) double-minded, Jam 4:8, (5) anti-Christ, 1Jo 2:18-22, 4:3; 2Jo 1:7, (6) carnal Christians, Rom 8:7, 1Co 3:1-3, (7) disciples of the devil, 1Jo 3:8-10, (8) grieving the Holy Spirit, Eph 4:30, and (9) quenching the Spirit, 1Th 5:19.

The Apostle Peter gives us a great dissertation on virtue, which we will study further, in 2Pe 1:1-11, “*Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.*”

VIRTUE AND CAPACITY

2 Peter 1:1-2

05/09/04

Philippians 4:8 From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation] whatever personal loves exists, whatever is commendable, if there is any virtue and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

We have now begun the subject of virtue, which is the foundation for all that is true, honorable, just, of proper motivation, and commendable. This is why Paul says, *"If there is any virtue [and there is] and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."*

Virtue in the believer is the visible manifestation of the invisible, i.e., metabolized doctrine and the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, true happiness depends on virtue manufactured inside the predesigned plan of God, and it does not depend on fame, success, prosperity, power, approbation, sex, etc. As virtue is the visible manifestation of humility toward God, arrogance is the visible manifestation of Satan's invisible cosmic system. Virtue is the monopoly of God, and therefore it can only be produced through the laws of divine establishment and living the spiritual life inside the predesigned plan of God.

2Pe 1:1-11 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence [virtue], and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

All believers are given a great challenge. We are not here to merely get by; in fact, we are not here for very long, and our lives are a drop in the ocean compared to eternity, Jam 4:13-14, *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.'" The challenge is to keep our priorities straight and stay in touch with eternity; the opportunities of being in touch with eternity exist now, yet most believers barely keep in touch with time. Many believers spend no time in God's Word and therefore are not disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have rejected the principle of Joh 8:31-32, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Peter opens his second epistle in 2Pe 1:1 with the introduction, "*Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ ...*" Peter and his brother Andrew were in the fishing business with James and John, and they were very successful businessmen. But, by the time Peter wrote this epistle, many changes had taken place in his life because he had learned a lot of God's Word. He saw the vanity of living for this world. He understood Luk 9:25, "*For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?*" This is the man to whom Jesus had said in Mat 16:23, "*Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.*" This same man was now a man of fantastic humility because he realized how meaningless and empty life is without God.

- He realized that "being good" and treating people right was not the main issue of life, as Solomon learned in Ecc 1.
- He realized that seeking happiness in pleasure was not the main issue of life, Ecc 2:1-11.
- He realized that living for children and family was vanity, Ecc 2.
- He realized that looking for happiness from money, wealth, and prosperity was vain, Ecc 5.
- He realized that building a reputation was vain, Ecc 7.
- He realized that living for sex and intimate relationships was vain, Ecc 7.
- He realized that looking for happiness in the "hero image" was vain, Ecc 9.

"*Simon Peter, a bond-servant...*" The word "bondservant" is the Greek noun *doulos*, which literally means a slave. Being a slave is the greatest occupation in life when you are the slave and God is the master. God is a master who takes care of his slaves in a magnificent way. Peter uses the word "*doulos*" to emphasize the principle that there are no accidents in the spiritual life; as long as God wants you to be alive, you will lack nothing that is necessary to sustain your life. You will have the greatest opportunities, happiness, privileges, and blessings in life. These all belong to you because God is your master. This slave, Peter, holds the highest rank in the Royal Family as an apostle.

"*...and apostle of Jesus Christ...*" An apostle (*apostolos*) was a high-ranking officer, equivalent to an admiral in the Athenian navy (fifth century B.C.) or a governor; *apostolos* meant command responsibility. Until the completed canon of scripture, God selected *apostolos* to command the church. In recognition of grace, Peter calls himself "*doulos*," and in recognition of responsibility, he calls himself "*apostolos*."

"*...to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours...*" Every believer begins with the same faith, but none of us end up the same. Everyone has the same chance at salvation; we are given equal privilege and equal opportunity, but after that, equality no longer exists, Deu 30:19, "*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live.*" In eternity past, the sovereignty of God elected us to privilege, but we have the freedom to accept or reject His way of doing things. God has one will for all of us; He wills the highest and best for each one of us. Sadly, most believers say, "I'm too busy for that!" Some fail, some are winners, some are losers, some are under divine discipline, some are under the sin unto death. God has a perfect plan to reveal His perfect will, but we all have the freedom to accept it or reject it. Every believer will remain a loser until doctrine becomes the top priority in his life. Believers who advance toward spiritual maturity advance in grace, but believers who live in the cosmic system abuse grace. They are using grace like they use people, to satisfy their own lusts and desires. When doctrine is not top priority in a believer's life, he is using grace, and when a believer uses grace, he is using God, and when you try to use God, you are going to be a loser.

"*...by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ...*" Every believer starts out equal at regeneration, the only place where there is any equality in life. God the Holy Spirit not only provides the power, but He also provides the freedom necessary to advance in God's plan, and the policy of this plan is grace. Grace gives us all an equal start and sufficient provisions to go forward to spiritual maturity. We all start on an equal basis, but after that, it all depends upon how much doctrine you

metabolize and apply. All a loser will have is his resurrected body and nothing else to show for a life full of bad decisions. There will be rewards given to the believer whose work and advance to maturity glorifies God, and this is the result of virtue. We are responsible for our own decisions. Learning to take responsibility for your own decisions is the principle of human maturity and the beginning stage of developing virtue. You cannot be mature as a person until you accept responsibility.

The phrase “by the righteousness” in 2Pe 1:1 is translated from the Greek preposition *en* plus the instrumental of *dikaiosune*, which means righteousness as well as integrity. This virtue and integrity come by means of the Lord Jesus Christ. He developed and used it in His humanity (Luk 2:40,52; Phi 2:5), and so can we. Truth plus good decisions results in integrity. In the Christian life, Bible doctrine and the power of the Spirit manufacture integrity.

It is the decisions that you make related to God’s plan that are the major issue. Every believer is witnessing to the millions of angels in the spiritual realm; our life is observed every day by angels involved in the angelic conflict. This Christian character and integrity comes “*by means of the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*” Our virtue comes through the righteousness and virtue and integrity of our God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The divine policy and purpose is stated in 2Pe1:2, “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*” The policy of grace and prosperity and the divine purpose is stated here and then amplified in verses 3-11. “Grace” is the Greek noun *charis*, which refers to the policy of God toward man. Grace is God’s right to deal with us on the basis of the Cross; God is free to express His love to us through grace. Therefore, grace is an expression of God’s love for us. Grace always depends on the character and nature of God, not us. Grace is what God can do for you. Remember that there never is a time, nor will there ever be a time, when we could earn or deserve anything from God.

Throughout the centuries, legalism has infiltrated the church and grace believers have been under great persecution, Gal 4:29, “*But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh [Ishmael from Hagar] persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit [Isaac from Sarah], so it is now also.*” Ishmael was born from that which the flesh and human viewpoint produced. God had promised Abraham and Sarah a son when Sarah was barren and beyond menopause. Sarah came up with her own plan, and she said to Abraham in Gen 16:2, “*Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.*” Sarah planned it, and Abraham initiated it in Gen 16:4, “*And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived.*” Hagar carried it out in Gen 16:15, “*So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.*” This represents what happens when we try to do things our way rather than God’s way. Even to this day, the race that came from Hagar still persecutes the race that came from Sarah.

Legalism is man’s ability and man’s work intruding on the plan of God. Man always has some talent, ability, gimmick, or plan to try to help God along. But grace rejects human plans, talent, ability, gimmicks, games, and viewpoint. The only way any believer can recognize subtle legalism and remain in grace is to take in doctrine daily, Psa 26:3, “*For Thy lovingkindness [grace] is before my eyes, and I have walked in Thy doctrine.*” Unfortunately, some believers will never know the wonderful things God has for them, simply because they refuse His grace.

God is waiting, “tapping his foot,” to be gracious to you, Isa 30:18. He is waiting to make some of you wealthy or successful, or give you social prosperity or romantic and sexual prosperity—God is waiting to share his happiness with you! What is it that He is waiting for? He is waiting for the cup of capacity in your soul! God is our host in the devil’s world; however, the host cannot pour where there is no cup. This cup is your very own soul and its capacity is built from Bible doctrine.

VIRTUE AND GRACE

2 Peter 1:1-8

05/16/04

Philippians 4:8 (corrected translation) From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation] whatever personal loves exist, whatever is commendable, if there is any virtue and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Our study of virtue has brought us to 2Pe 1:1-11, which is a fantastic passage describing all the aspects of the virtue of the Christian way of life. In verse 2, we read, “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*” The Greek word for “grace” is *charis*, which refers to the policy of God toward man. Grace is God’s right to deal with us on the basis of the Cross. Grace always depends on the character and nature of God.

All three members of the Trinity are involved in this policy of grace, where grace is the policy of God the Father, the work of God the Son, and the enabling power of the Spirit. All three members of the Trinity invested everything they had in grace. It required a policy to be established by the Sovereign of the universe. It took an amazing, unique, unprecedented action called the Cross of Jesus Christ to set it up. It takes ongoing unlimited power flowing from the Godhead to mankind to perpetuate this concept called grace.

What is the purpose of grace? Why did God do it? What is God accomplishing with this policy, this investment, this unprecedented allocation of resources? Well, God has put everything on the line, so to speak, to back up grace, and it is *all His work*. God will never bless us because of human merit but because we have His righteousness as born-again believers. God blesses on the basis of His merit, His virtue, and His holiness.

The moment we made a non-meritorious decision to believe in Jesus Christ, God performed at least 40 benefits for us; among these are imputing His righteousness to our soul, creating in us a human spirit, and giving us eternal life, Tit 3:5-7, “*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*”

His grace justified us, meaning that the grace of God imputed to our souls the very righteousness that in turn made us eligible to receive all the other blessings from the “grace pipeline.” The pipeline begins at God’s justice and ends at God’s righteousness resident in our souls. The imputation of righteousness at salvation means instant justification and a lifetime of grace provision.

In order to even get started with us, God had to perform radical surgery at the very beginning. This necessitated a plan, a plan that would require omnipotence, sacrifice, and genius. It also required that He reveal to all the angels, and all creation, something about Him called grace.

1Co 15:45-49 So it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual. The first man is from earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [Jesus Christ].

At the moment of salvation we receive a human spirit, and we become a brand new creature, a new spiritual species, and that is major surgery.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

2Pe 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

The grace of God always comes first, setting the stage for every facet of the Christian way of life.

- Joh 1:17 — grace and truth
- Rom 1:7 — grace and peace
- Eph 2:8 — grace and faith
- 1Ti 1:2 — grace and mercy
- 2Pe 3:18 — grace and knowledge

Grace sets the stage for truth, peace, faith, mercy, and knowledge. It is necessary to be reminded of the grace of God as we set out to learn and master the mechanics of virtue in 2Pe 1:5-8.

2Pe 1:5-8 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith [doctrine] supply moral excellence [virtue], and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours [spiritual maturity] and are increasing [spiritual momentum], they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage shows how one quality in our soul leads to and develops another, and then another. This study requires that we examine ourselves to see if these qualities are being manifested in our lives.

We always need to be reminded of grace, which is the source of our blessing, and also of the Giver of the gift of virtue. However, lest we become ensnared by our own arrogance, and we begin thinking that we are somehow responsible for these qualities in our souls, we need to look at the end of Peter's letter. What is Peter's final conclusion in the matter?

2Pe 3:17 You, therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand [the existence of false prophets and the destruction of earth and the heavens on the day of the Lord], be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Daniel put it like this in Dan 12:3, "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

Without grace, there would have been no justification, no regeneration, no reconciliation, and no salvation. Without salvation, there would have been no faith, and without faith, there would have been no virtue. It all begins with grace. Grace is the producer of the whole show. Grace produces the show that virtue stars in.

Phi 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble], whatever is right [just or fair], whatever is pure [of proper motivation], whatever is lovely [pertaining to those areas of personal love in your life], whatever is of good repute [commendable about others], if there is any excellence [arete, meaning virtue] and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Virtue is God's word in action, Isa 55:10-11, "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

2Pe 1:3-8 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith [doctrine]

supply moral excellence [virtue], and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours [spiritual maturity] and are increasing [spiritual momentum], they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are the passages where Peter develops the analogy of Greek drama in connection with virtue, with virtue as the lead actor on the stage. God has established the means whereby He can give to us magnificent blessings without compromising His attributes, and this is called grace. Part of the grace orientation of the mature believer is becoming a master in the basic principles of grace so that he can function properly and magnificently as an ambassador for Christ. There are seven conclusions we can draw with regard to the subject of grace.

1. God exists, Psa 14:1, *"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good."*
2. God reveals Himself through the Bible, 2Pe 1:20-21, *"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophesy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."*
3. God has a plan for the Church. God not only has a plan, but His plan is *perfect*, and His plan includes *you*.
4. God's plan is based on a policy, and His policy is called grace. Jesus Christ came to reveal the grace of God to all creation, Joh 1:17, *"For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ."* After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there were 11 men who were entrusted with carrying the good news of this new dispensation called the Church.
5. The grace of God is divided into three categories: (1) pre-salvation grace, Tit 2:11, *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men";* (2) salvation grace, Eph 2:8 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God";* (3) post-salvation grace, Gal 2:20a, *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."*
6. The Church-age believer is saved by grace, therefore, we are required by God to live by grace, Col 2:5-7, *"For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord [that is, by the grace of God], so walk in Him [also by the grace of God], having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude."*
7. Every believer owes both the plan and the grace of God a hearing. God makes this perfectly clear throughout His Word. The perfectly logical conclusion is this: If God exists, *and* if He has revealed Himself through an incredible book called the Bible, *and* if He has put together this awesome plan just for you called grace, *then* He is giving to you in grace, no matter where you are in life; even if you have not yet believed in Him, He still continues giving. The rain comes down and the sun shines for all of us.

The Doctrine of Grace

1. Grace is not held back or withdrawn because of failure; in fact, it is one's failures and faults that usually compel him to reach out for the kindness and benefits of grace.
2. Grace cannot be lessened because of failure or sin. This means that God cannot do less in grace for one who is sinful than He would have done if that person had been less sinful. Through the Cross, the sin question has been set aside forever, and grace is extended to all mankind.

3. Grace cannot incur a debt. An act is not gracious if under any circumstances a debt or an obligation results.
4. Grace is not something that God owes the human race because of the Cross. The payment of a debt could never be an act of grace. The offer of salvation to the human race is not something that God owed the human race; is it not something He had to do. It is a free gift and strictly a manifestation of the grace of God.
5. Grace is never the overpayment of a debt or a reward for trying hard. Grace is neither treating a person "as" he deserves, nor treating a person "better" than he deserves. Grace is treating a person without the *slightest reference* to what he deserves.
6. Grace did not appear in the immediate divine dealings with the sins of the world. Grace did not judge our sins; justice and righteousness did.
7. Grace is not the issue in dealing with the sins of the saved. What God does in forgiving us experientially in time is based on the Cross and all that was accomplished!

The Cross of Jesus Christ provides eternal salvation to the unbeliever, and provides the means for the believer to be restored after he sins. In the divine forgiveness and cleansing that takes place when a believer is restored, only confession is required of the believer. Then there is absolute forgiveness and cleansing promised by God. In His death, the Lord Jesus Christ provided the sufficient ground for both the salvation of the unsaved and the restoration of the saved.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF VIRTUE IN GREEK DRAMA

Unity of Action, Unity of Time, Unity of Place

2 Peter 1:5-7

05/30/04

In our ongoing study of the subject of Biblical virtue, we have now come to 2Pe 1:2, “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*” The Apostle Peter’s opening words in this verse mean literally “Grace to you.” This means that *you* are important to God, and God has a policy with regard to you, a policy to care for you, prosper you, and bless you.

Peter goes on to say, “Grace to you and peace.” The Greek word for “peace” is *eirene*, the origin of the English proper name “Irene.” *Eirene* means peace and blessing, but its basic meaning is prosperity, so Peter is really saying, “*Grace to you and prosperity be multiplied (or increased)...*” This is spiritual prosperity, social prosperity, mental prosperity, economic prosperity, etc.

Next we see the divine viewpoint on how grace and prosperity are multiplied, with a prepositional phrase—*en* plus the instrumental of *epignosis*, which means literally “*through the instrument of metabolized doctrine.*” *Epignosis*, translated “knowledge,” is metabolized doctrine. The entire verse should be translated, “*Grace to you and peace be multiplied by means of epignosis knowledge (or metabolized doctrine) of God and of Jesus our Lord...*” Multiplication of grace and prosperity comes from learning the knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter continues in 2Pe 1:3, “*Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence...*” The “divine power” is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit and Bible doctrine, Heb 4:12. Every believer has been given the power and ability to receive blessings from God. 2Pe 1:4 continues, “*For by these [His doctrine, His glory, and His excellence] He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*”

Verses 5-7 introduce a subject that takes us back to the 5th century B.C. in Athens, Greece, at the time of men of genius like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, when Greek culture was considered to be at its peak. The Greeks of that day and age excelled at the writing and performance of drama, and Peter is about to take us through a study of Greek drama in 2Pe 1:5-7 and show us how it applies to our lives in a fantastic way.

2Pe 1:5 begins, “*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge...*” The Greek verb translated “applying all diligence” is *pareisphero*, which means to make every effort, or to make a constant effort. The verb translated “supply” is *epichoregeo*, which was used for the man who provided the finances to train the Greek actors. The actors were called the *choregeo* (chorus). Peter is going to list a chorus, or a *choregeo*, of seven principles in 2Pe 1:5-7.

The training of the chorus was the most important job in the production. The actors would sing the lines of the play and set the mood as the narrators of the story. They were trained to perfection, and they needed someone to pay for the yearly expenses. Therefore, *epichoregeo* came to mean “supply and furnish.” Unfortunately, there are very few *epichoregeo*’s in the Christian life because there are very few believers willing to pay the price.

In 2Pe 1:5, the phrase “in your faith” is translated from *pistis*, which refers here to doctrine, or that which one believes—“*Furnish (or supply) by means of your doctrine.*” Doctrine belongs to all of us; whether we use it or not is another issue. Doctrine is the only possession we have that can please God and glorify Him, and at the same time provide the capacity we need in every facet of life. Metabolized doctrine is the supplier of your very own drama.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1Co 4:9, *“For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.”* The word for “spectacle” is *theatron*, which means a theater, a place for public shows, a play, or a place for the performance of dramatic representations. We each have our very own drama. We have our very own *epichoregeo*, Bible doctrine, which will furnish and supply everything we need. Your life will either be a drama that glorifies God, 1Co 6:19-20, or a drama that lives for the god of this world, 2Co 4:4.

In 2Pe 1:5, “moral excellence” is the Greek word *arête*, which means manliness, excellence, and virtue. At the time the Bible was written the word “virtue” was very popular; in fact, the Romans defined virtue as follows:

- Devotion and loyalty to one’s family. Loyalty was the key to being virtuous—loyalties to the family, to friends, etc.
- Reverence and devotion to the authorities of the time, which was revealed by the exact performance of all that was required.
- Respect for the laws of establishment and the Roman government.
- Justice or faith. To the Romans, faith meant staying true to one’s word, paying one’s debts, keeping one’s oath, and performing all obligations. In the Roman business world, a man’s word was his bond, and signed contracts were not even used.
- Self-control, i.e., a well-organized life.
- Consistency and perseverance, even under the most trying circumstances.

This is the basis for understanding what Peter meant by “virtue.” To communicate a point of doctrine in the Roman Empire, Peter uses the Roman meaning of virtue.

In the Christian life, virtue is the top priority in God’s system, and virtue must come before production. Virtue is the lead actor in your drama, and only the invisible power of filling of the Spirit (Eph 5:18) and Bible doctrine can produce this virtue. Virtue is the visible manifestation of the invisible.

All virtue must have an object toward which it is directed. Virtue is manifested by enforced humility directed toward authority and genuine humility directed toward God and man. Virtue is manifested by worship toward God and morality toward man. It is confidence toward God and courage toward man and circumstances. For the believer, virtue and integrity come from *epignosis* doctrine in the soul, not abstaining from sin.

A principle that all Greek dramas followed was to produce unity— (1) unity of action, (2) unity of time, and (3) unity of place. These were the three important concepts of Greek drama. The action all took place at one time, just as your life takes place at the time ordained by God, and the action needed consistency and unity, just as your life must have consistency and unity to bring glory to God. As Phi 2:2 tells us, *“Be thinking the same things, maintaining the same virtue-love, united in soul, concentrating on the same objective.”*

Just as action, time, and place were very vital in Greek drama, they are vital for us as believers. Our lives must have virtue as our action, we must be in the right place (the predesigned plan of God), and we must be under the right timing (the timing of God). Virtue is the key to the Christian life—not morality, legalism, or social action. Virtue entails humility, while we live in a world of arrogance and subjectivity. Average Christians today do not want to be taught; they want to be in the drama, but they do not want to go through the training and practice.

The action of the drama must demonstrate unity and flow consistently. We can all have a life of freedom and stability, Gal 5:1, Mat 11:28-30. As Paul said in Phi 3:12-14, *“Not that I have already obtained it [the resurrection life, or ultra-supergrace status], or have already reached the objective, but I continue pressing on that I may attain that [overtake, gain, or arrive at the objective] on account of which I was overtaken by Christ Jesus. Brethren [members of the Royal Family of God], I evaluate myself*

as not yet having attained the objective [ultra-supergrace, the ultimate objective in time, living in resurrection life]; *but one thing I concentrate upon: constantly forgetting the things that lie behind and pursuing vigorously to what lies ahead, I keep on pressing on toward the objective for the purpose of the reward belonging to the upward call of God* [the Father], *by means of Christ Jesus.*" Without an objective, or unity of action, the drama fails to hold attention, fails to stimulate emotion, and fails to establish the intended mood. The continuity of our action in the Christian way of life is derived from the implementation of our invisible assets and the problem-solving devices.

The Greek drama of the 5th century B.C. compressed all the action into one day; every scene had to be performed the same day. The drama also had to occur in one locale; every scene took place in one setting. By analogy, *one day at a time* is the order for the Christian way of life, Rom 14:5-6. We reveal all our priorities on a day-by-day basis. Every Church-age believer must live one day at a time; each day requires unity of action, time, and place. The effectiveness of the action in that one day is determined by whether the believer is in fellowship, learning doctrine, and living in the predesigned plan of God, or out of fellowship in the cosmic system, and therefore whether he is functioning as a winner or a loser.

Important principles concerning the lead actor in the believer's life (his own drama) include the following:

1. In God's plan, Bible doctrine is first.
2. In God's authority, divine commands are first.
3. In God's policy, grace is first.
4. In God's objective, spiritual momentum is first.
5. In God's system, virtue is first.
6. In God's purpose, occupation with Christ is first.

In this analogy, there is no drama without an actor, and there is no service without virtue, and this requires humility and teachability. It is teaching that builds virtue.

Virtue is far higher than morality; morality simply makes sense as far as having a good, stable life, but virtue goes beyond morals into self-sacrifice and the thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ, Phi 2:5. Virtue is the lead actor in your life, the key to the whole drama. The believer must choose virtue as his lead actor in his very own personal sense of destiny.

The first virtue that you reveal is to assemble in church, because you must first be teachable. However, this is just the beginning, because teachability is just the means; real virtue leads to personal love for God. A believer who is ignorant of Bible doctrine does not love God. Without a relationship with God, there is no virtue. Your *epichoregeo* (supplier of virtue) in the spiritual realm is metabolized doctrine.

1. The will of God for mankind is two-fold; for the unbeliever it is salvation, and for the believer it is metabolized doctrine, 1Ti 2:3-4.
2. The pastor-teacher's communication is the source of metabolized doctrine, Tit 1:1, Eph 4:11-13.
3. Cosmic believers fail to metabolize doctrine, 2Ti 3:2-7. They are often learning academic subjects, but it is all mere *gnosis*.
4. Only metabolized doctrine can be useful for problem solving, Eph 1:17. The "spirit of wisdom" refers God the Holy Spirit using *epignosis* doctrine to enable you to handle your problems, whether in adversity or prosperity.
5. All genuine fellowship with believers is based on metabolized doctrine and virtue, Phm 1:6.
6. Only metabolized doctrine can fulfill the mandate of "virtue first" in the predesigned plan of God, Phi 1:9.
7. Only metabolized doctrine can fulfill the entire predesigned plan of God, Col 1:9-10.
8. Only metabolized doctrine can provide blessing under the predesigned plan of God, 2Pe 1:2.

9. A “zeal” to know God is useless without metabolized doctrine, Rom 10:2.

10. True wealth and prosperity come from metabolized doctrine, Col 2:2.

11. The new man can only be renewed and energized through metabolized doctrine, Col 3:10.

Christian activity has no meaning in without virtue. All action is useless without doctrine first. The Bible does say to do certain things, but these things by themselves are not the Christian way of life. They are the *results* of the virtue of the Christian way of life.

It is easy to do something wonderful for someone you love; in fact, you generally do not even consider it a sacrifice. Motivation by love eliminates the strain and sacrifice of life, 2Co 5:14, “*For the love of Christ motivates us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.*” If you love God, you do not even consider your actions sacrificial. The first command of the Christian life is to develop virtue, and that virtue is exercised in two directions—motivational virtue (personal love toward God) and functional virtue (unconditional love toward mankind). You are commanded to have virtue first (not love). If you did all these “great things” without virtue, all you would have is wood, hay, and straw at the judgment seat of Christ, 1Co 3:12.

We must keep in mind that the background to our passage is Greek drama. Greek drama was composed of a chorus that would dance and sing and reveal the drama in a poetic way. In 2Pe 1:5-7, Peter is using the chorus of a Greek drama to illustrate the principles we need in our life to be pleasing to God.

Our chorus line is made up of virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. In Greek drama, the dancing and the singing of the chorus was the basis for describing the action of the drama. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, what is our chorus line? What does your chorus line sing—what does it reveal and about your life? Is your chorus line singing out the qualities given in this passage? Or is your chorus line singing out hypocrisy, ignorance, anxiety, deceitfulness, revenge, hatred, and loss of temper? As we can see, the analogies between Greek drama and the divine plan of God are fantastic. Virtue becomes the lead dancer and singer in the chorus line of the spiritual life. Everything else in our life hangs on the basis of virtue. This is why the phrase, “supply with your doctrine, virtue,” is in the *imperative* mood. It is a vital command for the spiritual life.

2Pe 1:5 continues, “*...and in your virtue, knowledge...*” We must make the decision to either believe or reject the knowledge we receive from Bible doctrine; it cannot be forced upon us. To supply your virtue, and then knowledge (*gnosis*) there are two important decisions you must make. You must subject yourself to academic teaching, which requires positive volition toward doctrine (staying up-to-date with the communication of every doctrine taught by your pastor). You must also combine faith with what you hear, Heb 4:1-2, “*Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.*”

THE ILLUSTRATION OF VIRTUE IN GREEK DRAMA, PART 2

Knowledge, Self-Control, Perseverance, Godliness

2 Peter 1:5-7

06/02/04

We are continuing our study of the brilliant analogies between Greek drama and the divine plan of God in 2Pe 1:5-7, “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply [epichoregeo] moral excellence; and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control; and in your self-control, perseverance; and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness, love.”

1. The *epichoregeo* is the one who provided the finances to train the Greek actors. He provided the necessary furnishings and supplies. Bible doctrine is our *epichoregeo*, since it provides everything needed for our own drama, our spiritual life.
2. The *choregeo* (chorus) was composed of excellent dancers and singers. The training of the chorus was of the utmost importance, analogous to the seven qualities in mentioned in 2Pe 1:5-7—virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and virtue-love. These qualities are to be the *chorus line* of our lives.
3. It took time to train the members of the chorus and required a tremendous amount of money and effort, just as there is a cost to develop these qualities in our life, Pro 23:23, Mar 12:30.
4. Just as every Greek chorus has a chorus leader, Bible doctrine is the leader of our “divine chorus,” 2Pe 1:5.
5. The lead actor in the Greek chorus was the most important, and virtue is mentioned first in the chorus line. Basic virtues in the plan of God include enforced and genuine humility, love, worship, morality, courage, and confidence. Virtue goes far beyond morality; it is the quality of intrinsic good. Humility is the foundation for all virtue.
6. In Greek drama, action, time, and place are vital, as they also are in the believer’s life. Virtue must be our action, and we are to live one day at a time in our place inside the predesigned plan of God.
7. There was no Greek drama without a lead actor, and there is no Christian service without virtue first.
8. Christian service includes praying, giving, witnessing, serving, etc., which are all actions of the Christian life, but without the lead actor (virtue), there is no part to be played.
9. As the action of the drama was required to flow together with consistency, so the believer’s lifestyle is to be one of unity and consistency from the power of God within, Mat 11:30.
10. The *dramatic contests* also have an analogy to the Christian life. One could become wealthy overnight if he was successful in his drama, just as a positive believer, who is successful in his spiritual life, can become a winner overnight, Rev 2:7,11,17,26, 3:5,12,21.

God has provided the concept of routine in our life for a purpose, and it is designed to help us organize our life. An organized life depends on organized thoughts. Routine is also important in life because it prepares you for what is not routine. You need to learn to organize the routine aspects of life, so that they do not interfere with the enjoyable parts of your life. The key is being faithful even in the “small” routine things, Ecc 9:10, Col 3:17, Mat 25:21, Luk 16:10-12. The monotonous schedule of work and other duties can result in boredom, but it is necessary to prepare us for abnormal or challenging times.

When one failed to prepare for life in a Greek drama, it was known as a “tragedy.” When one succeeded in preparing, it was called a “comedy.” If you fail to prepare for the spiritual life through metabolized doctrine, this too will be known as a tragedy. The tragedy of life and of the world is not that men do not know God; the tragedy is that, knowing Him, they still insist on going their own way.

If you succeed in preparing through metabolized doctrine it will be known as a comedy, meaning relaxation and success. Once you begin to metabolize doctrine as your routine in life, taking it in daily, you develop capacity from this routine, and there comes a time when you are able to use it in a magnificent way. From your capacity you can handle the pleasures of life (the comedies) as well as the disasters (the tragedies).

Again, 2Pe 1:5 instructs us, *“Now for this very reason also, making every effort, by means of your doctrine supply [epichoregeo] virtue, and in your virtue, knowledge...”* The Greek word for “knowledge” is the noun *gnosei*, referring to academic information. *Gnosis* is simply perception of doctrine. The reason *gnosis* is used rather than *epignosis* is because Peter can only take us as far as our volition. We must make the decision to either believe or reject the knowledge we receive from the teaching of doctrine; it cannot be forced upon us. Peter is saying, *“Supply with your doctrine, virtue; and to your virtue, knowledge.”*

Why is knowledge mentioned after virtue? Why add more doctrine? God wills the highest and the best for us. It is negative volition toward doctrine that prevents us from experiencing it. Even though the sovereignty of God wills you to be a winner, you can still be a loser. The issue here is whether or not you have humility and are teachable. Virtue must take you from *gnosis* (academic knowledge) to *epignosis* (wisdom, metabolized doctrine).

Peter goes on in 2Pe 1:5-6, *“...and in your knowledge [doctrinal perception], self-control; and in your self-control, perseverance; and in your perseverance, godliness ...”* The first member of the chorus is virtue; the second is perception of doctrine. The third member of the chorus to which virtue leads is “self-control,” the Greek noun *enkrateian* (from the root word *egkrateia*), which means self-discipline or self-control. Self-discipline and self-control are based on humility and are a manifestation of basic virtue. This word also means an *organized life*. Self-discipline results in an organized life, which is based on two concepts:

1. Having the right priorities which means “a time for everything,” Ecc 3:1-8, a time for God, doctrine, family, friends, business, etc.
2. Bible doctrine, which will give you the capacity to organize your life and have inner happiness with the right priorities.

It is the organized person who is persistent and consistent in the perception of doctrine. Under the doctrine of election, there is no excuse—equal privilege and equal opportunity for all. You have the same opportunity as everyone else to advance to spiritual maturity, and your personal drama can glorify God, if you so choose. Those who whine and complain have made a series of bad decisions and are in self-induced misery. They have the wrong priorities; they are without *egkrateia*.

The believer must have organization in his use of time and his use of energy, Eph 5:16. The self-disciplined believer comes to Bible class, and he is teachable through humility. He has organized his life on the basis of Biblical priorities and a doctrinal scale of values.

Self-control is taught in many passages in the Bible, Pro 16:32, Pro 25:28, Jam 3:2, Psa 39:1, Rom 6:12. The Apostle Paul asserts that self-control must characterize the one who would contend for a crown in 2Ti 2:4-5, *“No soldier on active duty entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life [a believer on active duty in the army of God does not live a normal life and is not in bondage to the details of life], so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier [God enlisted you as a soldier for Him on the day of your salvation]. And also if anyone competes in the athletic games, he does not receive a winner’s crown unless he trains according to the rules.”* Every athlete went through identical training no matter what event he mastered. This is analogous equal privilege and equal opportunity for every believer inside the predesigned plan of God, as the place in which we train and compete.

Many Christians may well believe that they are sinners and that they need to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, but they do not believe that they really need the Word of God daily. They reject the principle of Neh 8:18, where a revival was taking place in Israel because of the Israelites’

desire for doctrine from their teacher, Ezra: *“And he read from the book of the Law of God daily, from the first day to the last day.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ made doctrine His delight on a day-by-day basis, Pro 8:30. Doctrine promises blessings to those who listen daily, Pro 8:34. We need the Word of God daily to survive, Mat 4:4, Luk 9:23. The Lord Jesus Christ taught doctrine every day, Luk 19:47. The early church met daily, Act 16:5. The daily intake of doctrine is also taught in Psa 61:8, 72:15, 119:164, 145:2; Acts 2:46, 5:42, 20:31, Heb 10:25. A daily commitment to spiritual exercise and self-discipline is dogmatically taught in the Scriptures. It is the only way that you will ever fulfill your drama and your personal sense of destiny.

When a believer lacks self-control, he is defenseless against the attacks of the cosmic system. Only the believer inside the predesigned plan of God is living the Christian way of life, and therefore is qualified to compete in the angelic conflict. The *agonistai* of Paul’s day who were those who worked out just to stay in shape, and did not qualify for the games. Interestingly enough, this word is the origin of the English “agony,” and is analogous to the believer who comes to Bible class but remains in the agony of the cosmic system with his own arrogance.

The *athletai* (athletes) trained under the strict rules of the national gymnasium for ten months. They were not allowed to leave the large walled area of the gymnasium, and had to exercise under the authority of the *gumnasiarch*, the director of the gym (analogous to the pastor). They were all on the same strict diet (other foods being analogous to distractions of the cosmic system). Everyone participated in group exercise naked outdoors, regardless of the weather (analogous to everyone getting the same doctrinal teaching). Daily trumpet calls had to be met each day at various times; to miss one was to be disqualified. Everyone had equal privilege and opportunity to compete.

1Co 9:24-27 illustrates how we are to be self-disciplined to compete for an “imperishable” reward: *“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave [he keeps it in training], lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”* Each winner in the national games received many rewards, including a crown of ivy leaves, representing the rewards he would receive when he returned home. This is analogous to us receiving eternal escrow blessings when we go home to heaven. He had a special entrance cut into the wall of his hometown city, through which he would pass when he returned. A plaque was hung on the wall after the opening was re-sealed. This is analogous to our names being recorded in the permanent historical record section of heaven because of our invisible impact on history during the Church-age, Rev 3:12.

Self-control is the system of authority that gives you concentration on the subject being taught. It gives you good manners, poise, and thoughtfulness of others, so that all believers have the opportunity to fulfill the function of perception and metabolization as ordained by God for the local church. Self-control means (1) dedication, (2) commitment, (3) instruction, and (4) discipline. The word “discipline” means to “drive on” or something performed or practiced in order to develop skill. Anyone can exercise, but to stick with it consistently takes character, training, and self-control. Exercise for the Royal Family in the congregation of the local church means (1) self-control, (2) assembling together, (3) concentrating on the teaching, (4) good manners, (5) silence, (6) not commenting, (7) not disturbing others, (8) not moving around, (9) objectivity, (10) persistence in spite of distraction.

We are now ready for the fourth member of the chorus line, 2Pe 1:5-6, *“Now for this very reason also, making every effort, by means of your doctrine supply [epichoregeo] virtue, and in your virtue [supply] knowledge [gnosis-referring to biblical academic information] and in your knowledge,*

[supply] *self-control, and in your self-control, [supply] perseverance.* “Perseverance” is the Greek noun *hupomonen*, meaning patience, endurance, perseverance, or persistence. It means that in spite of opposition or distractions, you are not influenced by others. It means courageous endurance in spite of all opposition, and includes active and energetic resistance to hostile forces. It therefore means to persevere or to stand fast. This fourth member of the chorus represents *consistency*.

The first four members of your chorus line should be (1) virtue (respect, loyalty, and devotion), (2) knowledge (perception of doctrine), (3) self-control (an organized life), and (4) perseverance (endurance and consistency). Perseverance gives us momentum and progress; the believer who becomes “more than a conqueror” is the believer who endures. Endurance fully releases its benefits when the believer refuses to quit. On the road to spiritual maturity we have to keep driving forward.

Hupomonen is used for the ability of the believer to persevere when being pressured, Jam 1:12, and for those who stick with doctrine in spite of all the pressure from the kingdom of darkness, Luk 8:15. Our Lord said in Luk 21:19, “*By your endurance you will gain your lives.*” The attitude of willing to be victorious, and the will to excel, are the things that endure. These qualities are so much more important than the events that take place around us.

The Apostle Paul used this same word in Rom 15:4-5 and 2Co 6:4, as well as Rom 5:3-4, “*And not only this but we also delight in our tribulations knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance proven character: and proven character hope [confidence].*” Trials, temptations, and disappointments can all be helps instead of hindrances if one uses them rightly. They not only test the fiber of character but also strengthen it. Every trial endured and weathered in the right spirit makes a soul nobler and stronger than it was before. If you are ever going to be a part of a ministry from God, you must learn to endure.

Next in 2Pe 1:5-6, we have the fifth member of the chorus line: “*...and in your knowledge, [supply] self-control; and in your self-control, [supply] perseverance; and in your perseverance, [supply] godliness...*” “Godliness” is the Greek word is *eusebeian*, a technical term for living the spiritual life. The Greek root word *eusebeia* is actually mistranslated “godliness” in the English language. It specifically refers to the spiritual life of the Church-age believer. This spiritual life, *eusebeia*, only functions by *epignosis*, metabolized doctrine circulating in the soul. When left to our own devices, we come up with a lot of different ideas as to what constitutes so-called “godliness.” *Eusebeia* refers to the following:

1. Godliness, derived from the Greek *eusebeia*, connotes the duty and responsibility of the royal priesthood to God under “operation grace.”
2. Godliness, the spiritual life, is related to our Lord’s residence in the predesigned plan of God for His life, 1Ti 3:16.
3. Godliness refers to residence, function, and momentum inside the predesigned plan of God for your life. This is synonymous with *experiential sanctification*.
4. In 1Ti 4:7-8, godliness is compared to physical exercise. With doctrine as top priority, it requires continual self-discipline for the function of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine.
5. Godliness is related to your perception of Bible doctrine, Tit 1:1. There is no spiritual life without spiritual metabolism.
6. Godliness, what you do in the spiritual life, is indestructible, 2Pe 3:11. Everything outside the predesigned plan of God will eventually be destroyed; anything developed inside God’s plan you take with you forever into eternity.
7. Godliness is the Christian way of life in the predesigned plan of God, 2Pe 1:2-3, “*Grace and prosperity be multiplied to you by means of the epignosis doctrine [metabolized doctrine] from God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has graciously given to us everything*”

pertaining to life [logistical grace] and godliness [the spiritual life], [how?] through the epignosis doctrine of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”

THE ILLUSTRATION OF VIRTUE IN GREEK DRAMA, PART 3

Brotherly Love and Impersonal Love

2 Peter 1:5-9

06/13/04

2Peter 1:5-7 Now for this very reason also, making every effort, by means of your doctrine supply [epichoregeo] virtue, and in [with] your virtue [supply] knowledge [gnosis, referring to biblical academic information] and in your knowledge, [supply] self-control, and in your self-control, [supply] perseverance [endurance or consistency], and in your perseverance, godliness [living the spiritual life], and in your godliness, [living the spiritual life], [supply] brotherly kindness..."

"Brotherly kindness" is the sixth member of the *chorus line* we have been studying in the subject of Greek drama. Here we have the Greek noun *philadelphia*, meaning *brotherly love*. Without this love, you will never be happy or have capacity in life. This "brotherly love" is not the phony "love" found in many churches today. It is not calling each other "brother" or "sister," or standing up and turning around to tell people you love them in church. The church is not a "lonely-hearts club"; we are here to learn Bible doctrine. In the perception and metabolization of Bible doctrine, real impersonal, unconditional love is developed, and this is love for all believers. It is an objective, unbiased love that emphasizes the subject, rather than the object of the love.

In 1Jo 4:21 we are given the command that *"the one who loves God should love his brother also."* When a believer metabolizes Bible doctrine, he receives motivation to love God as well as believers. Believers without Bible doctrine can sing and talk about God, and yet not love God at all. Your love for your fellow believer is to be even greater than your love for members of your own earthly family. This does not mean that we neglect our families and our responsibilities, but we are not to let our earthly family interfere with the Royal Family of God, our true family.

In Mat 12:46 we read, *"While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him."* Our Lord's mother and brothers apparently came to Him for reasons found in Mar 3:21, *"And when His own family heard of this [that He claimed to be the Son of God], they went out to take custody of him; for they [members of His family] were saying, 'He has lost His senses.'" His own family, including His mother, thought He was crazy! They were standing outside; they did not even wish to even come inside and listen to Him, Mat 12:47-49, "And someone said to Him, 'Behold, your mother and your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to you.' But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers!'"* The Lord Jesus Christ taught that His followers are even closer to Him than His natural family and closest relatives, Mat 12:50. The will of God is summed up in one verse, 1Ti 2:4, *"He wills all men to be saved and to come to the [epignosis] knowledge of the truth."*

Joh 3:14-18 shows the importance of brotherly love: *"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? O Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."*

Personal love is not in view in 2Pe 1:7 because personal love is without virtue, Mat 5:46, *"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?"* Impersonal love requires virtue because the one who loves is doing so from virtue within, not for

overt reasons. Personal love is directed toward a few with whom you are compatible, while impersonal love is directed toward all. When someone says, "I love you," because they love your beauty, personality, sense of humor, money, etc., there is no virtue in that love.

Virtue is found in impersonal love, and a person who has virtue will also have the capacity for personal love. Virtue love is found in Rom 5:5, "*And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*" It is the power of God the Holy Spirit that enables the believer to have the virtue needed for "*brotherly love.*" The only personal love that has any real virtue is personal love for God, which is the function of your royal priesthood. Virtue-love toward God is personal, while virtue-love toward man is impersonal. In personal love toward God we have virtue as a priest, and in impersonal love for mankind we have virtue as an ambassador. Personal love for God is motivational virtue, 2Co 5:14.

1. "Brotherly love," or virtue-love, is necessary to fulfill divine mandates such as Mar 12:31, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*"
2. This love covers sins and does not repeat them to others, Pro 10:12, 17:9; 1Pe 4:8.
3. This love gives us the ability to fulfill doctrinal standards such as Mat 5:41-42, "*And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.*"
4. This love compels us to treat one another as we would treat the Lord, Mat 25:34-40.
5. This love is a revelation to others that we are the students or disciples of the Lord, Joh 13:13-15,34-35.
6. This love is revealed by an unselfish desire to lose one's life, Joh 15:12-13.
7. This love is without hypocrisy and is manifested by affection, Rom 12:9-10.
8. It is not a love of independence or self-preservation, Gal 5:13, Eph 5:2.
9. This love comes exclusively from divine power, and not from human emotion, 1Th 3:11-12.
10. This love is manifested by a relaxed mental attitude and is absent of mental attitude sins toward anyone—those you know or do not know and those who are friends or enemies, Luk 6:27-28.

Brotherly love, the sixth member of the chorus line, is a system of thinking. We do not need to experience any kind of special feeling to manifest this love for members of the Royal family of God, but we must avoid mental attitude sins in order to fulfill the command, "*Love one another.*" Rom 12:10 says, "*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.*"

Brotherly love insures the serenity of mind that lays the foundation for toleration, flexibility, courtesy, and thoughtfulness of others. These manifestations of virtue become stronger and more consistent as the believer advances in learning Bible doctrine under the power of the Spirit. In the absence of doctrine, the old sin nature dominates the inner spiritual conflict for control of the soul, and the apostle Paul warns us about this in Gal 5:13-18.

By giving doctrine top priority in your life, you will rise above the pettiness that promotes mental attitude sins toward others. The perfect example of virtue-love of course was the Lord Jesus Christ who never committed a mental attitude sin, and never departed from His impersonal love for His followers and for all mankind, Joh 13:1, "*Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*"

The difference between personal and impersonal love must be noted in detail:

1. Impersonal love emphasizes the subject; personal love depends on the attractiveness, capacity, and response of the one who is loved. Personal love emphasizes the qualities in the one you are loving.
2. Impersonal love does not require intimacy, friendliness, or even acquaintance with the object of love. With impersonal love, a close relationship between the subject and the object is not necessary.

3. Impersonal love is simply the consistent function of your own integrity toward other people. In fact, it is a declaration to others that we are the students and disciples of the Lord.
3. Personal love requires that you know the object with some degree of intimacy, and the object of personal love must be attractive to you, share basic values with you, and have capacity to love you in return. This is why *phileo* love (*philadelphia*), which is personal love in the Bible, is mentioned before *agape* (impersonal) love.
 - a. You should be closer to some members of the Royal Family (*philadelphia* love) than members of your own earthly family, Mat 12:46-50.
 - b. If you cannot love your fellow believer whom you can see (*philadelphia* love), you cannot love God whom you have not seen, 1Jo 4:20.
 - c. If you do not love God, than you cannot love yourself properly, 1Jo 4:19.
 - d. If you do not have love for yourself, you cannot love your neighbor, Mat 19:19.
5. Only a few people qualify as objects of your personal love, whereas all mankind is the object of your impersonal love, Mat 5:43.
6. Personal love is designed for interaction with a few, while impersonal love is designed to benefit the human race.
7. Personal love is conditional; impersonal love is unconditional.
8. Personal love creates weaknesses, because both people bring their own problems into any personal relationship. The problems, shortcomings, and faults of two people are combined and multiplied by personal love. Personal love can cause subjectivity and mental attitude sins of jealousy, self-pity, and bitterness.
9. Personal love is never stronger than the integrity of those involved in the personal relationship. Impersonal love is the integrity that alone can strengthen and stabilize personal love. The most important function of impersonal love is the control of your own mental attitude.
10. Personal love may lead to compromise of the norms, standards, and values of the individual, when you give the person you love higher priority than Bible doctrine. Impersonal love, however, never compromises its virtue and integrity.
11. In 1Co 13:13, impersonal love is proclaimed the ultimate Christian virtue. Impersonal love is commanded, and personal love is optional.
12. Personal love is legitimate and potentially wonderful, but it is virtue-dependent, hinging on the virtue of impersonal love, which represents the highest degree of integrity the soul can attain.
13. Impersonal love also produces independence. A believer with impersonal love does not rely on the object of his love for strength and support, but rather is sustained by the Bible doctrine in his own soul. The believer who, over an extended period of time, learns to apply doctrine can solve or cope with the problems of personal love and maintain a marvelous relationship with others.
14. Impersonal love does not depend on emotional stimulation or attraction. This is the genuine and honorable independence of the believer who is spiritually self-sustained.

The Lord said in Joh 13:34, "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*" This is a new commandment because this is a love that requires the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit enabling the believer to love.

Your exclusive personal love cannot be given to rude, arrogant believers, nor should you burn up your nervous energy trying to do the impossible, which is "love all Christians with a personal love." The only love you can have for most individuals is impersonal love based on the strength of your own character. Through *impersonal love*, your *brotherly love* toward everyone will be basically the same, manifested by courtesy, thoughtfulness, sensitivity to the feelings of others, and tolerance and

flexibility in non-essential areas of disagreement or dispute. This is the love that honorably represents the Lord Jesus Christ in the devil's world.

The key to this virtue-love is personal love for God, for that is where real virtue begins; you do not begin by adjusting to mankind. You do not solve the problems with people and interaction with mankind from psychology or philosophy or any other new gimmick; it must come from your personal love for God. True virtue only comes from truth, and it is only personal love for God that will ever develop the "inexpressible happiness" of 1Pe 1:8. Without personal love for God, the believer will react to injustice and unfair treatment, and his happiness will depend on how people treat him. Reacting is simply the result of preoccupation with self.

In 2Pe 1:7, the seventh member of the chorus line mentioned is the Greek word *agapen*, meaning impersonal love for all mankind: "*And in your godliness [living the spiritual life], [supply] brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, [supply] love.*" We now have the entire seven members of the chorus line:

1. Virtue (respect, loyalty, and devotion).
2. Knowledge (perception of doctrine).
3. Self-control (organized life).
4. Perseverance (endurance and consistency).
5. Godliness (living the spiritual life).
6. Brotherly love (love for members of the Royal Family).
7. *Agape* love (impersonal love for all members of the human race).

We now see what the chorus line accomplishes in 2Pe 1:8, "*For if these qualities [the dramatic seven of the chorus line] are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus.*" The dramatic chorus line will prevent you from becoming useless (ineffective) or unfruitful (unproductive). Through the dramatic chorus line (the seven qualities), you will fulfill your very own personal sense of destiny. Our whole Christian life centers around how much knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ we have, because the key to the Christian life is proper motivation.

Metabolized doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ gives the believer the proper motivation for living. We must be motivated, not by our love and respect for people, but by our love and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ. Proper motivation means being occupied with the person of Jesus Christ. Doctrine is the mind of Christ, and that is all that matters.

In 2Pe 1:9, Peter goes on to say, "*For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.*" The cosmic believer, who has only mere morality, has no understanding of how spiritually blind he is. He is blinded by either arrogance or animosity toward doctrine, or by indifference or apathy toward doctrine.

Satan has two main systems that he uses against believers. In his first system arrogance blinds the believer, and in his second system animosity toward truth blinds the believer. The target of Satan's first system is the believer's ego, resulting in pre-occupation with self to the exclusion of reality (as it happened to Satan himself in Isa 14:12-14). The target of Satan's second system is truth (Bible doctrine), resulting in antagonism toward Christ, His body, and doctrine itself. One system emphasizes self over God; the other emphasizes human viewpoint over divine viewpoint. One system was developed by Satan before the human race began, which is simply living for self rather than God. The other system was developed by Satan at the fall of the human race, which is human viewpoint over divine viewpoint.

The true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ will protect us from Satan's deceptions, "*in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes*" (2Co 2:11). And as the seven members of the chorus line in 2Pe 1:5-7 continue to function in our life, a drama will unfold that will bring glory to God before all the angels and the human race.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF VIRTUE IN GREEK DRAMA, PART 4

Good Works, Grace, and the Divine Invitation

2 Peter 1:5-10

06/20/04

We are continuing to study the development of the *dramatic seven chorus line* in 2Pe 1:5-7, “Now for this very reason also, making every effort, by means of your doctrine supply [epichoregeo] virtue, and in [with] your virtue [supply] knowledge [gnosis, referring to Biblical academic information]; and in your knowledge, [supply] self-control; and in your self-control, [supply] perseverance [endurance or consistency]; and in your perseverance, [supply] godliness [living the spiritual life]; and in your godliness, [supply] brotherly kindness [love for members of the Royal Family]; and in your love for members of the Royal Family, [supply] impersonal love for all mankind.”

The importance and the results of this “chorus line” are given in verses 8-11, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.”

We begin with the first phrase in 2Pe 1:8, “For if these qualities are yours...” The word “quality” is the demonstrative pronoun *tauta*, referring to the qualities and the virtues mentioned in verses 5-7:

1. Virtue (respect, loyalty, devotion).
2. Knowledge (perception of doctrine).
3. Self-control (an organized life).
4. Perseverance (endurance, consistency).
5. Godliness (living the spiritual life).
6. Brotherly love (love for members of the Royal Family).
7. *Agape* love (impersonal love for all members of the human race).

2Pe 1:8 continues, “For if these qualities [the dramatic seven chorus line] keep on being present within you and keep on increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We never “arrive”; therefore, we need the second member of our chorus line, *gnosis*, the perception of doctrine. We cannot afford to ever stop our intake of Bible doctrine, and live on “yesterday’s manna,” as the children of Israel in the book of *Exodus*.

The qualities in the dramatic chorus line will prevent you from becoming useless (ineffective) or unfruitful (unproductive). The Greek adjective translated “useless” is *argous*, which means lazy, inefficient, inactive, careless, indifferent, apathetic, and procrastinating. “Unfruitful” is the Greek adjective *akarpous*, meaning unproductive, without fruit, and contributing nothing to the instruction, improvement, or comfort of others. In 1Co 14:14, it means to contribute nothing to the support and comfort of others. In Mat 13:22, it indicates that the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches cause the believer to become unfruitful. In Jud 1:12, those without the “water” of Bible doctrine are considered to be *akarpos*, without fruit. Your priorities and the organization of your time are based on where your heart is. You have to decide what is important in your life and give it top priority as far as how you spend your time.

“...They render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Your whole Christian life centers around how much knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ you have, because the key to the Christian life is proper motivation. Metabolized doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ gives the believer the proper motivation to live. We must be motivated, not by our love and respect for people, but by our love and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the principle of

motivational virtue (love for God), must precede Christian service. Otherwise, the believer's production is "wood, hay, and straw," and will be burned up as useless and unfruitful works at the judgment seat of Christ, 1Co 3:11-15. In 2Pe 1:9, Peter goes on to say, "*For he who lacks these qualities [the dramatic seven chorus line] is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.*" Here the Greek word *parestin* with the negative *me'* indicates that these qualities are not near, are not present, have not been stored up, or have failed to develop. You store up these qualities through your intake of doctrine.

"...*He who lacks these qualities [the dramatic seven chorus line] is blind [tuphlos, which means blindness or blackout of the soul].*" The "moral" cosmic believer is blinded by either arrogance or animosity toward doctrine, or by indifference or apathy toward doctrine. Satan has two distinct systems that he uses against the believer. In the first system, arrogance blinds him; in the second system, animosity toward truth blinds him. The target of Satan's first system is the believer's ego, resulting in pre-occupation with self to the exclusion of reality (as with Satan himself in Isa 14:12-14). The target of Satan's second system is truth itself, resulting in antagonism toward Christ, His body, and Bible doctrine. One satanic system emphasizes self over God; the other emphasizes human viewpoint over divine viewpoint. One was developed by Satan before the human race (living for self rather than God). The other was developed by Satan at the fall of the human race (human viewpoint over divine viewpoint).

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that those who were blind were "cleaned up" on the outside but not in their thought pattern, Mat 15:1-20. In Mat 23:24, those who are mentally blind "*strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.*" In 2Co 4:4, the "god of this world" specializes in blinding the minds of those in the world system. 2Pe 1:9 continues, "*For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted...*" The Greek word for "short-sighted" is the verb *muopazo*, which means to be near-sighted, to see dimly, to see only what is near, and to be carnally or earthly minded.

"...*For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.*" The Greek noun translated "purification" is *katharismos*, which refers to two categories of cleansing:

1. The initial cleansing from sin, which occurs at the Cross, where all our sins were judged.
2. Experiential cleansing and restoration to fellowship by simply naming and citing our sins to God, when we commit sins after salvation, 1Jo 1:9.

Understanding *katharismos* is based upon understanding the grace of God. When a believer is without metabolized doctrine and therefore without the dramatic seven chorus line, he cannot have grace orientation to life.

We read in our next verse, 2Pe 1:10, "*Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.*" The Greek phrase translated "more diligent" is the adverb *mallon* with the verb *spoudasate*, meaning to make every effort or to be motivated even more; *mallon* means "more than" or "much more," and *spoudasate* means making every effort, doing one's best, and being eager or motivated. The motivation comes from being *aware* of the predesigned plan of God, the angelic conflict, the distribution of your blessings, etc. It is simply a reference to the believer's priorities motivating him to go on in the Christian life and performing his very own personal drama.

"...*Make certain about His calling and choosing you...*" The Greek verb translated "make" is *poieisthai*, meaning to make, produce, work, accomplish, and perform. We are not saved by works, but that does not mean that we should not have any. There is a warning given to those who react whenever they hear a message that challenges them to produce good works in Tit 1:16, "*They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.*" The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, and one of the reasons is so that we can produce divine good, Tit 2:14, "*He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed*

and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Good deeds and works are a part of the election of God.

“...For as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.” The Greek verb for “make certain” is *bebaian*, which means to be firm, steadfast, sure, well-grounded, and unwavering, and in this verse it means to be steadfast concerning God’s calling and election. It is the will of God that all believers be motivated by the *calling* of God and the *election* of God. When these doctrines become a spiritual reality, you will have great motivation.

We are commanded to “make certain about His calling and electing you.” The Greek word for “calling” is *klesin*, meaning a calling, an invitation, or a legal summons. *Klesis* refers to the divine invitation to embrace not only salvation, but also the plan of God and your personal sense of destiny, which then results in the execution of your personal drama. You have received an invitation from God to obtain eternal salvation and to have the privilege of bringing glory to Him. All you have to do is learn to love Him, and He will do the rest, Rom 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called [the definite article *toi* plus the adjective *kletois*, meaning “the called ones”] according to His purpose.”

Man has three systems of perception whereby he can perceive and understand—(1) rationalism, (2) empiricism, and (3) faith. Faith is the only system of perception that is *non-meritorious*; man cannot take credit for his faith. The merit of faith is in the object; therefore, the spiritually dead unbeliever can make a decision to listen to the Gospel, and then believe in Jesus Christ. These positive decisions, made in a condition of spiritual death, are impossible apart from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. This is called pre-salvation grace, or *common grace*. The Holy Spirit’s pre-salvation ministry consists of the following:

1. Common grace, in which the Gospel is presented and made understandable.
2. The divine call, in which the personal invitation to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is given to the hearers.
3. Efficacious grace, in which the unbeliever’s faith is made effectual.

We can see the power of God the Holy Spirit in evangelism; it is not our job to force the Gospel on others, or try to “drag them across the line.” A good soul-winner is not someone who witnesses to a lot of people; it is one who presents the information *accurately* and *properly*. God will not hold us responsible for another person’s volition. Our job is to present the right information; it is the responsibility of God the Holy Spirit to do the convincing and convicting.

The sovereign will of God and the free will of mankind co-exist in human history by divine decree. However, in spiritual death, the free will of mankind is totally separated from God and totally helpless; therefore, the grace of God is all that can save us. Common grace comes first, then the call of God (mentioned in our main passage), which pertains to election, the invitation of God the Father through the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus Christ. Thirdly, there comes efficacious grace, the work of the Holy Spirit in making faith in Jesus Christ effective for eternal salvation. This is the invitation called in the New Testament, “the calling of God.”

The calling of God is without repentance, Rom 11:29, “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” God does not revoke His call, simply because He knows that some will not respond. God never changes His mind; He invites everyone to believe in Christ, 2Co 6:1-2, “And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you; behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.’”

It is true there is an acceptance that takes place before salvation, but it is accepting the information that God the Holy Spirit has presented concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Even when a person receives the information, he still does not have the faith to believe, and therefore God the Holy Spirit makes his faith effectual. Joh 1:12 declares, “But as many as received Him [the information

concerning the Lord Jesus Christ], *to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*" There is an acceptance that precedes becoming a child of God; we are to accept the information that God the Holy Spirit makes understandable to us, Eph 2:8, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that [grace, salvation, and faith] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*"

The spiritual death of mankind makes it necessary for the grace of God to function on our behalf. There are two reasons why the unbeliever cannot understand spiritual information on his own:

1. He is born in a state of spiritual death, which is total depravity, total separation from God, and total helplessness.
2. He is born *dichotomous*, which means he has a physical body and a soul, but no human spirit.

The spiritual death of the unbeliever, as a dichotomous being with an old sin nature, makes perception of the Gospel *impossible*, without the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit working on his behalf. We are totally helpless to understand any aspect of the Gospel, Job 32:8, "*But it is a spirit in man [the human spirit], and the Spirit of the Almighty [God the Holy Spirit] gives them understanding [perception].*" Without a human spirit, the individual cannot be guided by God, Rom 8:16, "*The Spirit Himself [God the Holy Spirit] bears witness with our spirit [human spirit] that we are children of God.*" This is why we need to be born again of the Spirit, Joh 3:5, "*Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water [the Word] and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'*"

At the moment we personally believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit actually creates a human spirit, a *pneuma*, to which God the Father imputes eternal life. We call the creation of the human spirit *regeneration* or being "born again." We are now body, soul, and spirit; we possess both *soul life* (human life) and *eternal life* (God's life). The unbeliever in spiritual death has no human spirit; therefore, spiritual death demands an act of grace on the part of God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit functions as a human spirit for us when we hear the Gospel message, so that we can comprehend spiritual truth.

Again, 2Pe 1:10 instructs us, "*Therefore, brethren, be motivated even more to make certain about His calling and election.*" These two doctrines, *calling* and *election*, should make us all more motivated. We should be "all the more diligent" to make certain about God's calling in our lives. There are too many Christians who have no motivation, and who do not realize that they have been given a divine invitation.

A believer who is motivated and loves the work he has been given to do, will also have greater blessing and success in social life and other areas, because motivation from one overflows into motivation in another. These positive believers have that great character trait called *contentment*. In this passage that we are studying in detail, the Apostle Peter is talking about a motivation that is far more important than natural motivation; this is *spiritual motivation*. Every one of us can and should have this motivation, when we realize the calling upon our life—the divine invitation to participate in the greatest victory ever won.

1Co 15:57 Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA

Pennsylvania Conference 2004

Revelation 2:18-29

06/27/04

Last week we held our annual Bible Conference in Beach Lake, Pennsylvania. We wish to thank the members of the Pennsylvania congregation and all those who used their time, talent, and treasure to make this conference another great success.

Revelation 2:18-29 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them. I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

There are two different views on the seven churches of Rev 2-3. One is that these seven churches portray seven historical stages the Church would go through; the other is that they represent different types of churches or believers in every generation. While both views are valid, we are studying them from the second perspective. For example, in Rev 2:2-3, as a church, or as individual believers, those at Ephesus produced divine good works and persevered, and had not grown weary, but in Rev 2:4, they had left their first love.

The church of Smyrna in Rev 2:9-10 went through tremendous tribulation and poverty, and would be facing suffering for blessing. The church in Pergamum in Rev 2:14 was warned about the false teaching of Balaam.

In Rev 2:18-20, as a church, or as individual believers, Thyatira tolerated false teaching, especially from the feminine influence called Jezebel, even though in Rev 2:19, they had good deeds, love, faith, service, and perseverance. They had grown because "their deeds of late are greater than at first." In Rev 2:25, they were told to hold fast until the Lord comes.

The believers at Sardis are told in Rev 3:1-2 to "wake up and strengthen the things that remain." In Rev 3:8, the believers at Philadelphia are described as having divine good deeds and a little power, and they have kept with doctrine and have not denied the Lord's name. In Rev 3:14, we see the lukewarm believers of Laodicea.

1. The Ephesus believer has some divine good, but has left his first love.
2. The Smyrna believer is willing to accept suffering for blessing.
3. The Pergamum believer is warned about compromising.
4. The Thyatira believer tolerates false doctrine, even though he has love, faith, service, and perseverance.
5. The Sardis believer needs to "wake up."

6. The Philadelphia believer has kept with doctrine.
7. The Laodicean believer is lukewarm.

The Apostle John writes in Rev 2:18, *“And to the angel [the future pastors of the church of Thyatira or future pastors who have the type of believers that were in Thyatira] of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this...’*” The Greek noun *aggelos* (transliterated “angel”) can be translated “messenger”; here it refers to communicators, the future pastors of the church of Thyatira. Established in 290 B.C., as a Macedonian colony, Thyatira became an important station on the Roman road from Pergamum to Laodicea and became a very wealthy city in the Roman province of Asia. It was the world’s center for the worship of the sun god Apollo. Thyatira was also famous for its labor unions, which had tremendous power and influence. The unions also sponsored the phallic cult, and various other cults were also present, which were vehemently opposed to Christianity.

One of the most popular cults today is the worship of the “god of career,” which is a direct violation of the principle of Exo 20:3, *“You shall have no other gods before Me.”* Many people spend all their time pursuing their goals and they forget their responsibility to God, Ecc 6:2, *“A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires, but God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them. This is vanity and a severe affliction.”* The “foreigner” could be a sickness, a domestic conflict, a disaster, a tragedy, or an unexpected calamity. The “foreigners” can ruin our dreams and force us to look back to God. Many believers have idols in their life, and when they serve these other gods it leaves them in the swamp of meaninglessness and emptiness. This was the condition of many believers in Thyatira, a church threatened with divine punishment through economic disaster.

Apollo, the god of “protection” that was worshipped at Thyatira, was represented with flaming rays and feet of burnished brass, the symbol of military and human power and human resources. Thyatira was the site of excessive cultic and demonic activity, as well as a very attractive and charming woman, who was known by the name of Jezebel, which was actually her title. The original “Jezebel” was the wife of Ahab, the king of Israel, 1Ki 16:31. She has stamped her name on history as the representative of all that is conniving, malicious, vengeful, and cruel. The Jezebel of Thyatira was akin to the Jezebel of the Old Testament. She represents all the distractions that sex and false religion can cause for believers who desire to execute their own personal drama and fulfill their personal sense of destiny.

In Rev 2:20, Jezebel is identified as a prophetess, closely attached to the Thyatira church, and powerfully influencing that church for evil. She pretended to be inspired by God and she seduced God’s servants into loose living, fornication, and idol worship, Rev 2:14-15. The Lord Jesus Christ says in Rev 2:20, *“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray.”* In spite of these desperate conditions in the church at Thyatira, the Lord gives them a gracious commendation for love and service in Rev 2:19, *“I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.”*

The word “idolatry” has two meanings—(1) the worship of a physical object or objects as god, and (2) inordinate attachment or extreme devotion to something. We become like that which we worship, Hos 9:10. An idol is actually defined as an object of extreme devotion, therefore, it could be almost anything in a person’s life, and idolatry begins in the mind and proceeds to overt practice, Eze 14:7, Jdg 2:10-13, *“Then [not knowing the Lord] the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals...”* The “Baals” were names of false gods in the ancient world:

1. Baal-berith, the lord and the guardian of the covenants, Jdg 8:33, 9:46.
2. Baal-gad, the lord of good luck or fortune, Isa 65:11.
3. Baal-hamon, possessor of abundance (the god of materialism), SOS 8:11.

4. Baal-hermon, the mountain god, Jdg 3:3, 1Ch 5:23, Deu 3:9; this was the worship of feelings and emotions.
5. Baal-peor, the god of prostitution and sex, Num 25:1-3.
6. Baal-zebul, the “fly god,” or the god of counterfeit, in 2Ki.

The dissertation on Thyatira begins in Rev 2:18, *“The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this...”* While Apollo was called the son of Zeus (the father of all gods), Christ’s claim is much higher: He is *the* Son God! This is the only time in *Revelation* where He refers to Himself with this title, as the supreme authority and source of all revelation. The Lord’s eyes are like a “flame of fire,” which means His inspection of every believer is piercing and just. Many believers have secret rooms in their soul that need to be dealt with. Most believers do not realize the importance of being alone with God so that He can deal with certain areas of their life. There is a secret room in every heart where the soul stores garbage and idols, and refuses to even admit that there is a problem. These things give an individual a low self-image, weigh down the heart with guilt, and worst of all, hinder and even destroy a believer’s confidence in his relationship with God. There is something in every soul that is never told to others, and at certain times it is brought to the surface by God.

Doctrine is pleasant to the soul, Pro 2:10, 19:8, 24:4; Ecc 7:12. Rejection of Bible doctrine results in destruction, Isa 5:13, Hos 4:6. Just as doctrine gives the rooms of the soul pleasure and freedom, the absence of doctrine produces slavery and bondage. Many believers have rooms in their soul where their imagination has developed certain idols in life. These rooms contain idols, errors, secret faults, fears, insecurities, and doubts. The Lord knows everything that is in our soul, and He is ready and willing to do everything necessary to free the believer from his slavery. He knows how sick we are in our heart, Jer 17:9, Rom 7:15. This “dark room” is one of the main reasons for negativity, depression, being sick often, etc. The Lord desires to deliver you, not condemn you. He does not want to make you feel guilty about this room in your soul; He wants to free you from it. Unless a believer is free from the chambers of imagery in his soul, these rooms of secret faults and sins, he will never enjoy true freedom.

“The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze ...” “Eyes like a flame of fire” connotes divine judgment. We bring disaster on ourselves, but the Lord Jesus Christ also disciplines individuals, churches, and nations continually. Jesus Christ not only controls history, but Jesus Christ is also the issue in history. For the believer in Jesus Christ there are great blessings in making decisions for the plan of God. There is no such thing as happiness for the believer outside the predesigned plan of God. Satan tries to manufacture a pseudo-happiness, but it always fails. This is both divine punishment on cosmic believers, and divine reprimand at the judgment seat of Christ through loss of rewards. This is the challenge to human volition in the angelic conflict, Jos 24:15. “Burnished bronze” is a reference to historical judgment on the nations as Jesus Christ controls history. The eyes like a flame of fire and the feet of bronze are two ways of describing the judgments that come upon believers who fail to execute their own personal drama. They fail because of residing in the cosmic system, rather than in the predesigned plan of God. This why some believers have economic problems. They do not operate under the laws of prosperity. We are stewards of whatever God has given us, and all that we have is God’s. Everything we enjoy is to be treated as a trust that God has placed in our hands, 1Co 4:7. The more God gives you, the more responsible he expects you to be. Bronze is used to depict rejection of the plan of God, resistance to doctrine, and inevitable cosmic involvement, and therefore represents bad decisions that destroy the individual’s future options, Isa 48:4.

Rev 2:19 continues, *“I know your deeds, and your love.”* The Greek noun *ergon* means accomplishments, or Christian production. The Greek word *agape* has to do with virtue and integrity, and all Christian production is based on virtue and integrity. There are two manifestations of your

virtue-love, the invisible and the visible. The invisible is the function of the royal priesthood, directed toward God. The visible is the function of the royal ambassadorship, directed toward man. There is no impersonal love apart from the motivating virtue, which is personal love for God. The first item of production is not a work; all production in the Christian life is based on thought. Action merely results from good motivation.

The second area of Christian production follows in Rev 2:19, “*I know your deeds [accomplishments, Christian production], and your love and faith.*” The Greek noun *pistis* refers to the three stages of the faith-rest drill. In stage one, faith claims a promise to deal with the individual’s fear, so that he can think. Then in the second stage, faith applies doctrinal rationales (such as the essence of God) to the situation of fear or adversity. By learning about who and what God is, you develop a stronger faith. In the third stage, you reach doctrinal conclusions, whereby you deal with a situation.

“*I know your deeds, namely the virtue-love [the functional virtue of impersonal love], and the faith [the operation of the faith-rest drill], and service and perseverance...*” The Greek noun *diakonia* is used for the function of the believer’s royal warrants—ambassadorship and priesthood—and full-time Christian service in God’s plan. This requires proper motivation and straight thinking, which leads to *hupomone*, which is translated “perseverance,” and connotes courageous endurance. You need objectivity and teachability to gain momentum from your perception of doctrine. You have to persevere inside the predesigned plan of God. All of us are weak in this life, and Satan as the ruler of this world has a power system that is far stronger than we are. Therefore, when we reject the predesigned plan of God, we fall into cosmic one, with its systems of arrogance (preoccupation with self), or cosmic two, with its systems of negative volition (antagonism toward doctrine).

In Rev 2:19, the secret to the Christian life, in one word, is *consistency*; you cannot live the Christian life unless you are organized. The only way to be organized is to be consistent and self-disciplined in your thinking and actions. Consistency in the Christian life includes three basic principles:

1. Consistency in living inside the predesigned plan of God, which in effect means consistency in the use of the rebound technique, which is the only way to reenter the plan, and regain the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. Consistency in a scale of values—Bible doctrine first, and making decisions based on that system of priorities.
3. Consistency in the ability to keep plugging in spite of failure, distraction, disillusion, and setback.

The Lord goes on to say in Rev 2:20, “*But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*” In the cosmic system, there is a great deal of toleration of Satanic ideas and concepts, and that is exactly what we see here. Legitimate toleration is based on the doctrine of impersonal love (in which we tolerate the failures of others), but here we have toleration of that which is false and evil.

Jezebel represents that which is dangerous and magnificent, and which lures the believer away from the predesigned plan of God and his personal sense of destiny. She was beautiful, and she was arrogant. The word Jezebel includes “beauty and brains”; this is a beautiful, intelligent, charismatic woman, and there is nothing wrong with these traits, but she was also ambitious and arrogant. She called herself a prophetess in order to advance her own agenda, gain attention, and satisfy her inordinate ambition. She gave herself this title to which she was not entitled.

1. Jezebel is not her actual name, but describes what this woman was like—beautiful, smart, and ambitious. She resided in the city of Thyatira as the head of a phallic cult, and used religion to make a name for herself.

2. She had succeeded in luring believers away from doctrine and into the phallic cult in a manner similar to the historical Jezebel who corrupted Israel. The worst invasion Israel ever faced was not the Assyrian army of 180,000; it was one woman named Jezebel.
3. The Word of God strongly opposes female leadership in spiritual things, 1Ti 2:11, 1Co 11:3.
4. The pattern for this Biblical prohibition of female leadership originates in the Garden of Eden, with the historical trend of the weak controlling the strong. The Bible calls the woman the “weaker vessel,” not because she lacks courage, but because she is dependent on the man, 1Pe 3:7.
5. The woman sinned first, and became weak, while Adam had not yet sinned, and therefore was still strong. In the moment when Adam looked on the first sinner, she was weak, and he was still in a state of perfection.
6. From the very beginning of man’s failure on planet earth, he was the victim of the weak controlling the strong. This pattern was set when the man took the fruit from the hand of the woman.
7. Adam did not take the forbidden fruit from the tree. He took it from the hand of the woman.

This Jezebel of Thyatira represents all that the kingdom of darkness uses to lead us astray from our personal drama and destiny in God’s perfect plan. She includes all the idols in our soul, everything in our life to which we give a higher priority than God’s Word. She controls many believers, taking them from the blessing of the predesigned plan of God into the cursing of the cosmic system. Many of them are very much like King Ahab; they were strong in their own field and in the world, but were led astray very easily. Therefore, we are given a gracious but serious warning by our Lord: *“But I have this fact against you, namely that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess.”*

THE ILLUSTRATION OF VIRTUE IN GREEK DRAMA, PART 5

2 Peter 1:10

07/04/04

We are nearing completion on the subject of virtue and the dramatic seven chorus line, with the warning given by the Apostle Peter just before he died in 2Pe 1:8-10, *“For if these qualities [the dramatic seven chorus line] are yours and keep on increasing [are ready for action], they prevent you from being useless [ineffective] nor unfruitful [unproductive] in the epignosis knowledge [metabolized doctrine] of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities [fails to develop these virtues, the dramatic seven chorus line] is mentally blind or short-sighted [unaware of the true meaning of life], having forgotten his purification from his former [past] sins. Therefore, brethren, be motivated even more to make your calling and election a spiritual reality.”*

The calling of God is an invitation whereby grace can change you; however, you must respond to the invitation. The calling of God simply means that God broke the silence between God and man; He reached out to us. The call of God reveals the mechanics of salvation and is the divine invitation to participate in the *greatest victory ever won*. The Lord Jesus Christ invites us to “Come to Me” in Mat 11:28; Joh 5:39-40, 6:37,44-45, 7:37-39.

“Come to Me” is a very important phrase; this refers to *believing* upon the Lord Jesus Christ, *not* asking Him to come to you. The unbeliever *responds to God’s invitation*; he does not invite God anywhere. No one has ever been saved by “inviting Christ into his heart.” We do not invite the Lord Jesus Christ into our heart because our heart is deceitful and wicked, Jer 17:9. Apostate teachers propose substitutes in place of faith, such as “inviting Christ into your life,” which an unbeliever could never do, because he has an old sin nature and has not yet been regenerated by God the Holy Spirit, Eph 4:22. He invites us to *come to Him*; we do not invite Him to come to us. This is a vital matter of accuracy, as we are dealing with salvation itself. Throughout His Word, God demands accuracy, and demands what is right. In Gal 1:6 Paul says, *“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.”* The “different gospel” was faith plus works, instead of faith alone in Christ alone.

The invitation is from God to us, *not* from us to God when we are still spiritually dead. He initiates *to us*; we do not initiate to Him. We must be accurate in every phase of understanding the grace of God, or else a little deviation will apply some form of human power to being saved, Rom 11:6, *“But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.”* God does *all the work*, and that is *grace*.

When you respond to the invitation and believe in Christ, God provides everything you need in salvation, 1Th 5:24. You must realize the calling of God upon your life—the divine invitation to participate in the *greatest victory ever won*. The call of God includes 2 concepts—(1) the invitation of God the Father to believe in Jesus Christ, and (2) the election of the believer.

The invitation of God the Father to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is the logical and inevitable result of the doctrine of common grace. Once a person listens to the Gospel, God the Holy Spirit makes that information understandable. Therefore, once the Gospel is presented, the invitation from God the Father is given to the spiritually dead person to believe in Jesus Christ. The scripture calls this the “calling of God.” The call of God follows the ministry of God the Holy Spirit in common grace. The call of God is said to originate from God the Father in Rom 8:28-30, and from both God the Father and God the Son in Rom 1:1-7. And we read in Rom 11:29, *“The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”* Even though God knows who will respond and who will not, He still sends out the invitation, in the doctrine of the unlimited atonement.

Paul wrote in 1Co 1:23-29, *“But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God*

and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God." We should think about and consider the calling of God upon our life and the privilege of receiving the divine invitation.

What you were before is not the issue; what you are now as a Christian is what matters. You are a *new creature* in Christ, and the only issue now is your spiritual life, which is based on one policy—grace. As a part of our calling we need to understand that we are now Royal Family of God, and the issue is Bible doctrine, not human achievement. In Eph 4:1, Paul said, "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.*" He goes on in Eph 4:4, "*There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling.*" The "hope of your calling" is the absolute confidence that when you believe in Jesus Christ you have eternal life and tremendous blessings *designed personally for you by God* in eternity past.

Paul wrote about our calling again in 2Th 1:11a, "*To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling...*" The "calling of God" is the doorway into election, where the believer has the opportunity to receive God's highest and best. The word "worthy" is the Greek verb *axios*, meaning to be deemed worthy, due something, fit for something, or suitable for something. This cannot be talking about salvation because in Eph 2:8-9 we read, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*"

Then what are we to be deemed worthy, due, fit, or suitable for? To be counted "worthy of your calling" means to *receive the highest and the best that God has elected you to receive*, beginning experientially the moment that He called you into the kingdom of His Son. Your calling is the doorway into election, where you have the opportunity to receive God's highest and best, therefore 2Th 1:11 continues, "*...fulfilling every desire for goodness and the work of faith with His power.*" You have the opportunity to participate in the greatest victory ever won, which is the result of the greatest battle ever fought in Col 2:14, "*Having cancelled out the certificate of debt which was against us by means of the decrees, and which was hostile to us and He [by means of the divine decrees] has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.*" The Lord has overcome Satan, sin, and death, and we have been called to live the spiritual life through the fulfillment of the *dramatic seven chorus line*, whereby our personal drama brings glory to God.

The means of God calling you is through the Gospel, to receive the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, 2Th 2:13-14, "*But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" We are called through the Gospel, and the calling of God has many purposes attached to it:

- We are called into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, 1Co 1:9. This fellowship is to take place in time when we "make our calling and election a spiritual reality."
- We are called into His kingdom and glory, 1Th 2:9-12. When we make our calling and election a spiritual reality, we receive what it means to be a part of His kingdom and receive His glory. His kingdom on earth is found in the predesigned plan of God for your life. His kingdom in heaven is the perfect place where we will live forever with Him. His glory is manifested by His character and nature, as well as all the divine blessing that comes from participating in the greatest victory ever won.

- We are also called into eternal life, 1Ti 6:12. We are to take hold of this life *now*, not just in the eternal state. This refers to an extraordinary peace that God desires for us to experience even in time.
- When we make our calling and election a spiritual reality, we enjoy the spiritual life (which is eternal life), in this life, Phi 3:10-11. We can experience resurrection life now in time, Rom 6:4. If you stick with the plan of God, you will go through times when you will experience death to the self-life, and then experience the newness of life, resurrection life. We do not always understand the will of God, but to trust His sovereignty completely is another matter, and this leads us to take hold of the eternal life to which we are called. The issue is “His will or yours?” To take hold of eternal life will allow us to experience fantastic inner happiness, in Phi 4:4. It will stop us from worrying and give us fantastic inner peace, Phi 4:6-7, a fantastic positive attitude toward life, Phi 4:8, total contentment in any and every circumstance of life, Phi 4:11-13, and phenomenal confidence that no matter what the odds, God will supply all our needs, Phi 4:19. We will experience deliverance from the bondage of the world and the stronghold of the cosmic system.
- We are called into His sufferings, 1Pe 2:21.
- We are called to inherit blessings 1Pe 3:9.
- We are called into eternal glory, 1Pe 5:10.
- We are called into liberty and freedom, Gal 5:13.
- We are called into peace, Col 3:15.
- We are called out of darkness, 1Pe 2:9.
- We are called according to a predesigned plan, Rom 8:28.
- We were called to receive an inheritance, Heb 9:15.

Again, 2Pe 1:10 exhorts us, “Therefore, brethren, be motivated even more to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.” The Greek word *eklogen*, translated “choosing,” means election—the act of God picking you out. It is specifically used for the act of God’s sovereignty by which, before the foundation of the world, He decreed his blessings to believers. This does not just refer to salvation, which is just the beginning of election. It was God the Father who elected us, and He willed the highest and the best for each one of us. Therefore, He has given us equal privilege and equal opportunity to receive His highest and best and to participate in the greatest victory ever won.

Our study has now led us to a technical subject that makes our Christian life very meaningful. As a part of the motivation behind the *dramatic seven chorus line*, we need to understand the doctrine of *election*. You have been elected, and the question you should have is “elected to what?” You have been elected to receive God’s highest and best.

The Doctrine of Election

Point 1: Definition. Election is the *expression of the sovereign will of God* in eternity past, before the universe existed and before mankind lived on the earth. Election is the sovereign, absolute right that God has over His creation. Election is one of two important principles originating from the sovereignty of God (the other being *predestination*). Election, along with *foreknowledge*, *predestination*, *justification*, and *glorification*, are all “printouts” from the doctrine of the divine decrees and the sovereign will of God.

- Foreknowledge is the aspect of God’s omniscience in which all things, past, present, future, eternal, material, intellectual and spiritual, and actual, are known by Him. His foreknowledge simultaneously knows every situation as well as every actual decision made by all His people.
- Predestination is the *provision* of the sovereignty of God for you in eternity past to provide for you God’s plan, purpose, and will for your life.

- Justification is a judicial act of vindication, since we are born under condemnation, being spiritually dead. Justification is an official judicial act that occurs every time a person believes in Jesus Christ. The justice of God acts on our behalf, pronouncing us justified, which means having a relationship with God forever, and having the perfect righteousness of God imputed to us. Justification means that God recognizes His perfect righteousness in us.
- Glorification is the act of God whereby ultimately the believer is conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

These fantastic benefits, direct from the sovereignty of God, belong only to believers and should give us tremendous confidence that God is with us.

Election applies to *believers only* (there is no such thing as double election, in which some are predestined to heaven and others predestined to the lake of fire), Rom 8:28-33, *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called and elected; and whom He called and elected, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things [such as election]? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies.”* Like predestination, election is for believers only, Eph 1:4. There is no election for an unbeliever; election deals exclusively with the blessing of God for the believer, Eph 1:3-6, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*

In Mat 22:14 the Lord Jesus Christ said, *“For many are called, but few are chosen.”* The adjective *polloi*, translated “many,” is used from a Jewish perspective which connotes both quantity and *totality*; therefore “all” would be an appropriate translation. This same word is used to mean “all” in Mar 10:48; Luk 10:40, 18:39. This comes out in Rom 8:29, *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.”* The Lord Jesus Christ is not just the firstborn among many of the brethren; He is the firstborn of *all* brethren!

Polloi appears several times in the book of Romans, as in Rom 5:12, *“Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and spiritual death through sin, and so spiritual death spread to all men, because all sinned.”* Rom 5:15-18 continues, *“But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died [referring to “all men” in verse 12], much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.”* All men have been reconciled to God and have the opportunity, through faith in Christ, to be justified before God, Rom 5:19, *“For as through the one man’s disobedience the many [the entire human race] were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”*

Therefore, Mat 22:14 reads, “*For many* [the entire human race] *are called, but few are chosen* [*eklektoi*, meaning elected].” The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for the sins of the entire human race on the Cross, and God extends the invitation to all, under the doctrine of the unlimited atonement. Therefore, “the many” (all men) are called, but few are elected.

Election is a benefit which expresses the sovereign will of God for each believer in the Royal Family during the Church-age. Therefore, election is the expression of the sovereign will of God for your life, whereas predestination is the provision of His sovereign will for your life. Predestination refers to the plan God has provided for each believer—the predesigned plan of God, your personal sense of destiny, participating in the greatest victory ever won, and the fulfillment of your very own personal drama. Under election, the sovereignty of God willed the highest and best for every believer, having previously deposited that highest and best into escrow for us in eternity past.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

From Eternity Past..... He Has Blessed Us

Ephesians 1:4

07/11/04

2Pe 1:8-10 For if these qualities [the dramatic seven chorus line] are yours and keep on increasing [are ready for action], they prevent you from being neither useless [ineffective] nor unfruitful [unproductive] in the epignosis knowledge or metabolized doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities [fails to develop these virtues, the dramatic seven chorus line] is mentally blind or short-sighted [unaware of the true meaning of life], having forgotten his purification from his former sins or past sins. Therefore, brethren, be motivated even more to make your calling and election a spiritual reality.

The Doctrine of Election

It was God the Father who elected us in eternity past, and in doing so, He willed the highest and best for each one of us, Eph 1:4, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." He gave us equal privilege and equal opportunity to receive His highest and best, and to participate in the greatest victory ever won. You have been elected, and the question you should have is "elected to what?" And the answer is that you have been elected to privilege and God's greatest blessings.

Point 1: Definition.

- Election is the expression of the sovereign will of God in eternity past before the universe existed and before mankind lived on the earth. Election is the sovereign or absolute right that God has over His creation. Election, along with foreknowledge, predestination, justification and glorification, are all printouts from the doctrine of the divine decrees and the sovereign will of God.
- Foreknowledge means that all things, past, present, and future, are known by God. His foreknowledge knows every situation, as well as every decision made by all His people.
- Predestination is the provision of the sovereignty of God for you in eternity past to provide for you God's plan, purpose, and will for your life.
- Justification is when the justice of God acts on our behalf pronouncing us justified, which means, having a relationship with God forever, having the perfect righteousness of God imputed to us.
- Glorification is the act of God whereby ultimately the believer is conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

So, election, along with foreknowledge, predestination, justification and glorification, are all printouts from the doctrine of the divine decrees and the sovereign will of God. Therefore they belong only to the believer and they should cause the believer to have a tremendous amount of confidence that God is with them.

Under election, the sovereignty of God willed the highest and best for every believer, having previously deposited that highest and best into an escrow account in eternity past. Not only do you have a magnificent destiny under the predesigned plan of God, but you also have the same privileges and opportunities as all other believers for the execution of that plan.

Point 2: There are three elections in history.

1. Israel under the ritual plan of God, Deu 7:6, Isa 45:4, "For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My elected one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me."

2. Christ under the incarnation plan of God, Mat 12:18, Luk 9:35, Isa 42:1, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My elected one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations."
3. The Church under the predesigned plan of God, Col 3:12, "And so, as those who have been elected of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

Each election brought a new category of species into history:

1. The election of Israel brought in the new racial species, the Jew. God chose Abraham to become the father of the Jewish race, Gen 18:19.
2. The election of Christ brought in the hypostatic union, which is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever, 1Ti 2:5, "*For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the God-man Christ Jesus.*" He had to become true humanity to be our Savior, our great high priest, and our mediator.
3. The election of the Church brought in the new spiritual species, called the Church or Royal Family of God. It is also called the "new creation" in the Bible, 2Co 5:17, Gal 6:15.

Point 3: The unique election of history: the Lord Jesus Christ. We begin with our Lord Jesus Christ because He was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world, Rev 13:8, "*And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.*"

Our Lord Jesus Christ was elected under the salvation plan of God; He was elected, or chosen, before the foundation of the world to leave Heaven and to come to planet earth to die for the sins of the entire world. Our election was to privilege and blessing; His election was to death and suffering. Is it any wonder why the Apostle Paul said in 2Co 8:9, "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.*"

Our Lord's election under the salvation plan of God was visualized in water baptism. The baptism of Jesus Christ was unique in Mat 3:13-14, "*Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?'*" John recognized Jesus Christ's impeccability and at first refused to baptize Him. In Mat 3:15, "*But Jesus answering said to him, 'Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.'*" The water represented something new—the Father's plan and will for the dispensation of the hypostatic union. Our Lord was now to begin His public ministry and eventually to go to the cross and be judged for the personal sins of mankind. Mat 3:16-17 continues, "*And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'*"

The election of Jesus Christ was impossible without *logistical grace support* provided for Him. Logistics is a military term referring to the military science of supply, provision, and planning of troop movements, necessary to sustain military forces. Logistics always plays a vital role in warfare, but more importantly, it is essential to your life as a believer. Every believer is alive today because of logistical grace, which is defined as divine planning, support, provision, and blessing for the execution of predesigned plan of God by the Royal Family, for the fulfillment of God's will, purpose, and plan for your life.

Election is closely related to logistics, for it is logistical grace support allows you to fulfill your election by becoming a spiritual champion. The Cross was the ultimate in logistical support. Jesus Christ was sustained and kept alive until He could bear all sins, Heb 9:14, "*Through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God.*"

Had logistical support been withdrawn, there would be no salvation for us.

Point 4: The Election of Israel. Israel became the first client nation in history in 1441 B.C. In the Jewish age, there were four Jewish client nations:

1. The United Kingdom, 1440–926 B.C.
2. The two separate client nations of the Northern and Southern kingdoms, 926–721 B.C.
3. The Southern Kingdom, 926–586 B.C.
4. Judah, 516 B.C.–A.D. 70.

The function, prosperity, and perpetuation of a client nation always depend on a certain percentage of mature believers. The election of Israel, as with all elections, applies only to those who have personally believed in Jesus Christ, and our Lord Jesus Christ was very clearly revealed to the Jews in the Old Testament; therefore, those who believed in Christ had an election and a plan. An election from God plus a plan from God equals a destiny. The election of Israel began a new racial species, beginning with Abraham at age 99. “True Israel” refers only to those who were born again, Rom 9-11.

Point 5: The Election of the Church. Like the other two elections, the Church was elected to execute a plan—the predesigned plan of God. Since A.D. 70, the Royal Family of God has produced invisible heroes for the Gentile client nations. The Church-age believer must not only understand his relationship to God, but his relationship to man and history as well. In fulfilling our relationship to God, we fulfill our relationship to man and history. Understand our election is necessary to glorify God, 1Th 1:4, “*Knowing, brethren, beloved of God, His election for you.*”

To understand your election, you must function under grace orientation, Col 3:12. Understanding election is orientation to the plan of God for your life, 2Ti 1:9. Works have no relation to our election, Rom 8:33. Knowledge of doctrine is essential to fulfilling our election to privilege, Tit 1:1. Election means we are responsible to preserve the client nation by advancing spiritually.

You were designed for God’s pleasure, Rev 4:11, Psa 149:4. God did not need to create you, but he chose to create you for his own enjoyment, and you exist for His benefit, His glory, His purpose, and His delight. Living for His pleasure is the first purpose of your election. Once you fully understand this, you will never again have a problem with feeling insignificant. If God considers you valuable enough to keep you with Him for all eternity, what greater significance could you have? The Bible teaches that because of His love He made us His children through His Son, Eph 1:5.

One of the greatest gifts God has given you is the ability to enjoy pleasure. He wants you to enjoy life, not just endure it. The reason you are able to enjoy pleasure is that God made you in His image. We often forget that God is a person, and although He describes Himself to us in *anthropopathic* and *anthropomorphic* ways, in His own way, He has feeling as well; He is not unsympathetic, or stone-hearted. He feels things very deeply as only deity can. The Bible tells us that God grieves, is jealous and angry, and feels compassion, pity, sorrow, and sympathy, as well as happiness, gladness, and satisfaction. God loves, delights, rejoices, and even laughs. Bringing pleasure to God is called “worship” in His Word, which says in Psa 147:11, “*The Lord is pleased only with those who worship him and trust his love.*”

Worship is a universal urge, placed in the heart of man by God, into the very fiber of man’s being, Ecc 3:11. If we fail to worship God, we always find a substitute, even if it ends up being ourselves. The reason God made us with this desire is that He desires worshipers, Joh 4:23. You may think of church services with singing, praying, communion, and hearing God’s Word as worship, but, while worship can include these elements, it goes far beyond them. Worship is a *lifestyle*, and it is for our benefit, only because we worship for God’s benefit. When we worship, our goal is to bring pleasure to God, not ourselves. Worship is not for us; it is for God. Our motive must always be to bring glory and pleasure to our Creator.

Election was provided before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). As always, the kingdom of darkness has promoted false doctrine to blind believers from the real meaning that God intended.

Election has nothing to do with God violating someone's free will (as hyper-Calvinism teaches); election relates to the *experiential* phase of God's plan for our lives. When the believer is inside the predesigned plan of God, the Holy Spirit controls his soul, and the old sin nature is restrained in his body.

Believers are commanded to make their calling and election a spiritual reality in 2Pe 1:10-11, "*Therefore brethren, be all the more diligent* [more motivated, from your perception of doctrine and recognizing your invisible assets] *to make your calling and election a spiritual reality. For as long as you practice these things* [making your calling and election a spiritual reality through the perception of doctrine, resulting in the fulfillment of the predesigned plan of God], *you will never stumble* [become a loser in cosmic system]. *For in this way* [execution of the predesigned plan of God in time], *your entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ* [at the judgment seat of Christ, when we enter the state of ultimate sanctification in the resurrection body] *will be abundantly supplied to you* [conveyance of the escrow blessings to winners in the eternal state]. What does this all mean? This brings out a very important aspect of election—tapping into the eternal riches that God elected you to receive. There are three *status quo*'s of the believer's existence. The first is the *temporal state*, from the time of salvation until either physical death or the Rapture. The temporal state is the time for the believer to choose the predesigned plan of God, for it is here that he either becomes a winner or a loser, either rich or poor. The conveyance of the wealth that God has elected you to receive in time means that you will be rich forever in a resurrected body. The term "loser" never means loss of salvation; it simply means spiritually poor in time and the lowest rank, with no rewards, in eternity. Winners will be spiritually rich in time and in eternity.

The second state of the believer is called the *interim state*. This is the state of the believer from physical death to the resurrection. After physical death, the believer is, in 2Co 5:8, "*Absent from the body and face-to-face with the Lord.*" At this time, winners and losers are in a state of equality; both have interim bodies and great happiness, and no distinctions are made in the interim state. (The only generation of Church-age believers that will skip the interim state is the Rapture generation.)

The third state is the *eternal state*, which begins with the resurrected body at the Rapture of the Church. The eternal state is the status quo of a resurrected body, having great decorations or having none at all. The judgment seat of Christ determines "rich and poor" and "winner and loser" in the spiritual realm. Under election, God willed for you to be a winner and be rich; however, you can reject that which God wills. God's desire is to bless you, and He has; however, your desires can cause you to reject His blessings, 2Pe 3:9, "*The Lord is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to a change of mind* [repentance]."

Our passage in 2Pe1:11 continues, "For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." The Greek adverb *plousios*, translated "entrance," means wealth and riches; it means to yield something abundantly, or to present in large quantity. Then comes phrase "will be supplied," which is translated from a verb we know well—*epichoregeo*, meaning to furnish, supply, and provide, specifically to supply all that is needed to be successful. The future tense shows that some believers (at least a small minority) are going to make their calling and election sure and enter the eternal state rich. They will be winners with eternal rewards and decorations. They will have privileges that extend above and beyond the resurrected body and ultimate sanctification. The future tense also points toward the judgment seat of Christ and the rewards awaiting winner believers. This is the culmination of wealth and riches "exceeding abundantly above all we could ask or think" (Eph 3:20) being conveyed unto us. For those believers who fulfill their election and stay faithful the plan of God in time, there are fantastic blessings awaiting them, the continuation of their blessings in time.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, PART 2

He has Blessed us with every spiritual Blessing

Ephesians 1:3-4

07/18/04

Our current study is the subject of election, and we have studied six major points so far in this doctrine. By way of review, Point 1 is the Definition:

- Election is the expression of the sovereign will of God in eternity past before the universe existed and before mankind lived on the earth. Election is the sovereign or absolute right that God has over His creation. Election, along with foreknowledge, predestination, justification and glorification, are all “printouts” from the doctrine of the divine decrees and the sovereign will of God.
- Foreknowledge is the aspect of God’s omniscience in which all things, past, present, future, eternal, material, intellectual and spiritual, and actual, are known by Him. His foreknowledge simultaneously knows every situation as well as every actual decision made by all His people.
- Predestination is the *provision* of the sovereignty of God for you in eternity past to provide for you God’s plan, purpose, and will for your life.
- Justification is a judicial act of vindication, since we are born under condemnation, being spiritually dead. Justification is an official judicial act that occurs every time a person believes in Jesus Christ. The justice of God acts on our behalf, pronouncing us justified, which means having a relationship with God forever, and having the perfect righteousness of God imputed to us. Justification means that God recognizes His perfect righteousness in us.
- Glorification is the act of God whereby ultimately the believer is conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

Under election, the sovereignty of God willed the highest and best for every believer, having previously deposited that highest and best into an escrow account in eternity past. Not only do you have a magnificent destiny under the predesigned plan of God, but you also have the same privileges and opportunities as all other believers for the execution of that plan.

Point 2: There are three elections in history.

1. Israel under the ritual plan of God, Deu 7:6, Isa 45:4.
2. Christ under the incarnation plan of God, Mat 12:18, Luk 9:35, Isa 42:1.
3. The Church under the predesigned plan of God, Col 3:12.

Each election brought a new category of species into history:

1. The election of Israel brought in the new racial species, the Jew. God chose Abraham to become the father of the Jewish race, Gen 18:19.
2. The election of Christ brought in the hypostatic union, which is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever, 1Ti 2:5. He had to become true humanity to be our Savior, our great high priest, and our mediator.
4. The election of the Church brought in the new spiritual species, called the Church or Royal Family of God. It is also called the “new creation” in the Bible, 2Co 5:17, Gal 6:15.

Point 3: The unique election of history: the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was elected under the salvation plan of God; He was elected, or chosen, before the foundation of the world to leave Heaven and come to planet earth to die for the sins of the world. Our election was to privilege and blessing; His election was to death and suffering.

Point 4: The Election of Israel.

Israel became the first client nation in history in 1441 B.C. In the Jewish age, there were four Jewish client nations:

1. The United Kingdom, 1440–926 B.C.

2. The two separate client nations of the Northern and Southern kingdoms, 926–721 B.C.
3. The Southern Kingdom, 926–586 B.C.
4. Judah, 516 B.C.–A.D. 70.

The function, prosperity, and perpetuation of a client nation always depend on a certain percentage of mature believers. The election of Israel, as with all elections, applies only to those who have personally believed in Jesus Christ, and our Lord Jesus Christ was very clearly revealed to the Jews in the Old Testament; therefore, those who believed in Christ had an election and a plan. An election from God plus a plan from God equals a destiny. The election of Israel began a new racial species, beginning with Abraham at age 99. “True Israel” refers only to those who were born again, Rom 9-11.

Point 5: The Election of the Church. Like the other two elections, the Church was elected to execute a plan, which we call the predesigned plan of God. There are several important principles concerning our election that we need to understand:

- There will be rich and poor believers forever in the eternal state. They will not be poor as we think of poor, but they will suffer the loss of rewards and privileges that they had been elected to receive.
- In the temporal state, the believer is either a winner or a loser, either rich or poor. You may or may not receive the wealth of your escrow account, depending on whether you fulfill the conditions, i.e., the predesigned plan of God.
- The conveyance of the wealth that God has elected you to receive in time means that you will be rich forever in eternity.
- Winners will be spiritually rich in time and spiritually rich in eternity. These are the phenomenal spiritual blessings provided for every believer, which include true love, peace, contentment, inner happiness, confidence, security, courage, freedom, and abundant life.
- God willed for you to be a winner and be rich; however, you can reject what God wills. God’s desire is to bless you, and He has, but your desires can cause you to reject His blessings.

The first conveyance, the “down payment,” of these blessings and privileges occurs in time, and spiritual capacity and maturity are needed to experience and appreciate these blessings. The second conveyance occurs at the judgment seat of Christ, and it will be overwhelming to the winner believer. We refer to these blessings as crowns, decorations, rewards, and privileges, but those descriptions do not even begin to describe the fantastic things that God has elected every single one of us to have, 1Co 2:9, Eph 3:20-21.

Because all of us have a free will, there are differences among believers in time, and there will be even greater differences among believers in eternity. The concepts of rich and poor are simply a description of the difference that will exist between winners and losers, those who have shame and those who do not. Why do they have shame? 1Co 15:33-34 says, *“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals. Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.’”* The command to stop sinning is not a reference to sinless perfection, but to lack of knowledge of God, which is described as shameful and sinful. Self-motivation in the spiritual life avoids shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ, 2Ti 2:15, *“Study to present yourself approved by God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed [at the judgment seat of Christ], handling accurately the word of truth.”*

The importance of fellowship with God in time to avoid shame at the judgment seat of Christ is brought out in 1Jo 2:28, *“And now my children, keep abiding in Him, that if He should appear [the rapture], we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame in His presence [Judgment seat of Christ]. To avoid shame at the judgment seat of Christ, the believer must use the invisible grace assets available to him. You alone are the one who can live your spiritual life; your decisions right now in time determine whether you will be rich or poor forever. Shame for the believer is the*

embarrassment of failure to fulfill God's plan under the principle of equal privilege and equal opportunity and spiritual freedom. Believers become losers because they reject principles such as Joh 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease"; and Luk 14:26, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate [love less] his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple." Loser believers have the legacy of Joh 12:43, "For they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God."

There will be perfect happiness and perfect contentment in heaven, but there will also be believers who suffered loss of rewards, a sign that they were losers in time. However, the very fact that the believer has eternal life in heaven in a resurrected body reveals that grace saved him, which in itself brings glory to God.

Point 6: Election and the Believer's Escrow Account.

1. An escrow is a written agreement entered into by three parties called the *obligor*, the *obligee*, and the *depository*, for the transfer of certain privileges or benefits. God the Father is the obligor, one who places himself under *legal obligation*. God the Father did so in eternity past when He provided both temporal and eternal blessings for every member of the Royal Family, and He made a promise, swearing by Himself (Heb 6:13). The second party is the obligee, and the obligee is the Church-age believer. God the Father (the obligor) has placed Himself under obligation to the believer (the obligee). Therefore, God the Father is *obligated* to bless every believer who uses His invisible grace assets to advance to spiritual maturity. You are the obligee; your name is written in heaven. You have the same privilege and opportunity as every other believer, under the doctrine of election, of receiving your escrow blessings for time, and then for eternity at the judgment seat of Christ. The third party is the depository; this is the person to whom all the deposits are entrusted. The depository is our Lord Jesus Christ in whom the blessings were deposited, in eternity past.
2. An escrow is a *sealed agreement* of the obligor (generally accompanied by the deed, bond, or possessions to be conveyed), made contingent on a certain future occurrence, or the performance of a specified action by the obligee. This agreement is delivered to the depository and held by him, pending the occurrence of the event or the required act of the obligee.
3. When the conditions attached to the escrow have been fulfilled, the depository delivers the agreement and the promised wealth to the obligee.
4. The depository (custodian) is allowed no discretion; he must follow strictly the terms of the agreement as it concerns the other two parties.

The depository and custodian is God the Son. In eternity past, God the Father deposited both temporal and eternal blessings with our Lord Jesus Christ in escrow, pending our future advance to spiritual maturity as the obligee, Eph 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

Under the predesigned plan of God, and the sovereign will of God expressed in election, the Church-age believer is obligated to fulfill that plan, prior to receiving his blessings from escrow. Temporal blessings on deposit are transferred to the believer when he fulfills the predesigned plan of God in time (not to be confused with logistical grace blessings given to all believers, Mar 10:29-31, Luk 18:28-30). Eternal blessings are transferred to the mature believer after the rapture at the judgment seat of Christ, where the winner is awarded special decorations, 2Co 5:10. This sealed agreement including two categories of blessings (temporal and eternal) was delivered to Jesus Christ in eternity past by God the Father, even *before* He expressed His sovereign will in election, and before He designed the predesigned plan of God in predestination, Eph 1:3. *Justification* is the mechanics for the transfer of temporal blessings; *glorification* is the mechanics for the transfer of eternal blessings, Rom 8:30.

Under the principle of election, God the Father is the author of the divine plan that reveals the fantastic things that He has prepared for those who love Him; He is the author of all worship, praise, honor, and adoration. Again, Eph 1:3-4 declares, *“Worthy of praise and glorification be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He elected us in Him before the foundation of the world.”* The word for “blessed” is the Greek adjective *eulogetos*, meaning “worthy of praise and glorification.” It has the connotation of appreciating God the Father for His fantastic plan, which staggers the imagination. The verb “has blessed” is translated from the *aorist participle* form of the Greek verb *eulogesas*, which means “having *already* blessed.” In the Greek language, when there is more than one verb in a sentence, the action of the *aorist participles* always precedes the action of the other verbs. The *aorist participle* in Eph 1:3 is “having blessed,” which comes before “He elected us.” Therefore, the *very first thing* God ever did was *ble*ss us!

“Elected” is the main verb, the aorist middle indicative form of *eklego*, which means to elect. Election is the expression of the sovereignty of God, who wills the highest and best for every believer in Jesus Christ. Therefore, He decreed to provide a portfolio of invisible assets for every believer by depositing, in escrow, the greatest blessings for every believer, *before the believer was even elected*. God decided to provide His highest and best for anyone who would believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He ordained that, under election, whoever believed upon His Son would have fantastic privileges and opportunities, Eph 1:3-4. We have been chosen or elected “in Christ” and have been given “every spiritual blessing” imaginable! The term “spiritual blessings” points to God the Father as the source, for they include temporal blessings as well as blessings in the spiritual realm.

These blessings that we have been elected to receive, have come from the work of God the Father on behalf of the believer in eternity past. God is blessed by giving to us. The fantastic blessings and the invisible assets that God the Father has provided for each member of the Royal family of God before creation are a part of election. Election has nothing to do with overriding your free will; election means that God desires to bless you. You have securities, blessings, and invisible assets that stagger the imagination. However, before these assets are usable and these blessings are attainable, they must be *understood*.

In eternity past, the blessings deposited in escrow were made contingent on the future performance of the obligee (the believer). Your advance to spiritual maturity in the predesigned plan of God is the condition for the transfer of your blessings from escrow to you. When the obligee attains spiritual maturity, he receives the first installment of blessings from the depository, Jesus Christ, and the second installment is conveyed to him at the judgment seat of Christ.

Spiritual blessing means maximum awareness of life. You treasure every moment of life, whether in adversity or prosperity; you have zeal for life, regardless of what it brings. This excludes being depressed or upset by the ups and downs of life. Spiritual blessing also means orientation to reality, objectivity, and the characteristics of spiritual adulthood. It includes maximum contentment, tranquility, and happiness, regardless of your station, circumstances, or status quo in life. It requires maximum use of the problem-solving devices provided by God for spiritual growth. Spiritual blessing means that you have a fantastic relationship with God based on the confidence that, while you have never seen God, you know and understand Him.

God also provides temporal blessings, which vary with each individual and his environment. They include establishment blessing, which is the blessings of privacy and freedom, the enjoyment of life and property, and protection from crime, reprisal, violence, and vindictiveness from others.

- Professional blessing is maximum success or efficiency in the profession God has provided for you.
- Business blessing, where applicable, means success as an owner or an executive of one’s own enterprise.

- Social blessing is the presence of loving, faithful, reliable, and stable friends, and maximum enjoyment of your relationships with them.
- Romantic blessing means a wonderful relationship with a member of the opposite sex. Romantic prosperity is perpetuated under all circumstances of adversity and prosperity, and includes sexual prosperity in marriage.
- Mental blessing is the ability to concentrate, to organize your thinking and your life, to synthesize, to analyze, and to have courage, which is the ability to think under pressure.
- Cultural blessing is maximum capacity for good entertainment—the enjoyment of the best in music, art, literature, drama, history, hobbies, etc.
- Health blessing is also given to some mature believers. (If you have already violated too many principles of health, you will have the ability to cope with your lack of health.)
- Leadership blessing, though not for everyone, is a blessing for some, by virtue of either their genetics or spiritual gift, or it can be acquired. This is the ability to take any assigned responsibility and do it efficiently, cheerfully, and effectively.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, PART 3

Election and Selection

Romans 5:12,15-19

07/25/04

Ephesians 1 is a fantastic chapter on the doctrine of election and discovering the things that God has prepared for His elect people. In Eph 1:3-4, we see the escrow account for the Church-age believer: *“Worthy of praise and glorification be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He [God the Father] elected us in Him before the foundation of the world.”*

Point 6 (continued): Election and the Believer’s Escrow Account: Long before He laid down earth’s foundations, God the Father had us in mind as the focus of His love. We have been given *“every spiritual blessing,”* and we have been chosen or elected *“in Christ”* to receive these fantastic blessings. These blessings have come from the work of God the Father on behalf of the believer in eternity past. God derives pleasure and is blessed by giving to us, Act 20:35, and all things were created by the Lord Jesus Christ for His own pleasure, Rev 4:11.

The first thing God ever did for us was to provide blessings for us, which is the means of glorifying Him. Billions of years ago, God the Father deposited into escrow the greatest blessings, which we cannot even imagine, tailored perfectly for each one of us. These blessings were made contingent on the future performance of the *obligee* (the believer). You have been elected, not only to receive salvation, but also to receive the greatest blessings for time and for eternity. God the Father, as the Grantor, deposited into escrow phenomenal blessings for time and eternity. These blessings are “on deposit” with the escrow officer, our Lord Jesus Christ. When we meet the conditions of the escrow (reaching spiritual maturity), then our Lord conveys these blessings to us in time. Then, at the judgment seat of Christ, He conveys blessings for the eternal state.

In addition to the fantastic spiritual assets, there are many temporal blessings mentioned in the scriptures—Gen 12:2, blessings of success; Gen 17:16, blessings of posterity; Deu 7:13, blessings in business; Deu 15:4, blessing of finances; Deu 23:20, blessing of land; Deu 28:12, blessing of prosperity; Deu 30:16, blessing of property; Psa 5:12, blessing of divine protection; Psa 29:11, blessing of peace; Psa 132:15, blessing of “more blessing”; Gen 49:25, blessing of sexual prosperity; Gen 24:35, blessing of silver and gold; 2Sa 6:11, blessing of one’s entire household; Deu 29:5, blessing of divine character; 1Ki 3:13, blessing of riches and honor; Exo 23:25, blessing of health; 1Ki 3:14, blessing of length of days; Deu 7:15, blessing of vengeance upon one’s enemies; Isa 41:10, blessing of strength. These are all based upon your attitude towards Bible doctrine, Pro 3:15, 4:7-10; Isa 29:24.

In human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree. All believers have the equal privilege and equal opportunity to receive their escrow. However, you can choose by your own free will to completely fail to receive these blessings. In eternity there are winners and losers, the rich and the poor, forever. The spiritually rich are winners in the predesigned plan of God who receive the transfer of their blessings from escrow, while the spiritually poor are losers in the cosmic system, but are still supported by God’s logistical grace. Their first loss is in time because they had equal privilege and opportunity at salvation, but failed to fulfill the predesigned plan of God. Therefore, their escrow blessings remain on deposit forever as a memorial to lost opportunity. They are a double loser, as they also fail to receive their eternal escrow blessings. Losers are under divine discipline in this life, 1Co 16:22, *“If anyone does not personally love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha.”* We are warned against this in 2Jo 8-9.

When we are “out of bounds” (outside the plan of God), we are grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit, Eph 4:30, 1Th 5:18; in rebound, we get back on the “playing field.” The Christian loser is defined as the Church-age believer in Jesus Christ who, through negative volition toward Bible

doctrine, has failed to execute the predesigned plan of God for the Church-age. He does not fulfill God's plan for His life after salvation. The loser *does not lose his salvation*; he only loses his escrow blessings for time and eternity. The Christian loser fails to use his power options (the filling of the Spirit and metabolization of doctrine). The loser is the believer in Jesus Christ who has wrong priorities and spends his life in the cosmic system. The loser has been called to a pastor, but because of cosmic involvement, he never sees his right pastor, or perhaps he only visits occasionally. In many cases, the loser finds his right pastor but rejects him, or only accepts him until he is distracted. However, the loser continues to receive logistical grace support and blessing.

The loser believer is described in the following ways:

1. The carnal believer, Rom 8:7, 1Co 3:1-3.
2. A prisoner to the law of sin, Rom 7:23.
3. A wretched believer, Rom 7:24.
4. Grieving the Holy Spirit, Eph 4:30.
5. Quenching the Spirit, 1Th 5:19.
6. The enemy of the Cross, Phi 3:18.
7. The enemy of God, Jam 4:4.
8. The flawed believer, Jam 1:23-24.
9. The "psycho believer" (double-minded), Jam 4:8.

Point 7: Selection and Election. An important principle related to the character and integrity of God is the doctrine of *selection*, which must be distinguished from election. Selection applies to your physical birth; God "selected" you to become a member of the human race, Num 16:22, Eze 18:4, "*Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine.*" Therefore, selection deals with our *physical birth*, while election deals with our *spiritual birth*. Since God knew in eternity past that you were going to be a member of the human race, and He also knew that you would believe in Jesus Christ, He selected you before He elected you. Selection must precede election; you had to be born before you could become a believer.

Selection is a technical term related to the divine imputation of human life at the point of physical birth. God as the creator is the inventor of human life. At the moment of physical birth, God imputes human life to the "format" soul, and the individual becomes alive. This is selection; God did not have to impute life to you, but He chose to do so in His sovereign will. Therefore, your life has meaning, purpose, and definition, regardless of environment or circumstances. The time, manner, and place of your entrance into this world were decreed by God in eternity past.

Simultaneously, at the point of your physical birth, Adam's original sin was imputed to the genetically formed old sin nature, resulting in spiritual death. When we are selected, we are already spiritually dead because of Adam's sin (not our own), Rom 5:12,15-19, "*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned... But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness [the Cross] there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*" One man's sin (Adam's) was imputed to us, and this is what made us sinners. However, our personal sins were never imputed to us

for judgment; instead, they were imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and judged. Jesus Christ took our place; He is our substitute, and His spiritual death was efficacious.

Selection is the sovereign decision to impute human life at the point of physical birth. Election is a term relating to the spiritual birth, or regeneration. Regeneration is the divine imputation of eternal life to the human spirit, created by God the Holy Spirit at the moment of faith in Jesus Christ. Being “born again” is a reference to regeneration, as described in Tit 3:4-7, *“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* Regeneration is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit in creating the human spirit for the imputation of eternal life at the point of salvation.

The very fact that when a person is born he receives the imputation of human life from God, means God has a purpose for every member of the human race with no exceptions, both believers and unbelievers. And that purpose is found in one verse, 1Ti 2:4, *“He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* When God selects, He does so from His perfect decision making, i.e., His *sovereignty*. Selection occurs when the sovereignty of God imputes human life to the soul at birth; election becomes a reality when a person believes in Christ for salvation. At the moment you receive the imputation of eternal life, you also receive your invisible assets, such as *election* and *predestination*. The awareness of God’s marvelous plan for your life comes gradually through learning doctrine. Being delivered from spiritual death through faith in Christ, when we might have been forever under condemnation, is the *motivational challenge* of election, which follows selection. Selection at birth, followed by election at regeneration for every believer, opens the door for the greatest opportunity ever extended to the human race—an opportunity for invisible but real historical impact. You have a greater opportunity than even the greatest rulers of history. Your influence, while invisible, can go far beyond any human success in history. This opportunity is described by two words—election and predestination.

So great is the opportunity of these two invisible assets, and so fantastic is the grace behind it (for we cannot earn or deserve any of it), that it is beyond human description. God provided everything for you to execute His plan, and He provided it knowing that you had an old sin nature. Knowing every one of your failures, He still selected you at birth and He still gave us our election at regeneration. Our first revelation of this grace process is the sole requirement of non-meritorious faith in Christ for salvation, and therefore the Bible says in Col 2:6, *“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord [in grace], so walk in Him.”* It is always the object of faith that has the merit. In salvation, faith in Christ attributes all the merit to Christ. You are not saved by anything you can think, say, or do. Likewise, none of us earn or deserve our invisible assets, and none of us are any better than anyone else, in the light of grace. Only God can create this equality of opportunity! So that there is no such thing as a handicap in the perfect plan of God, whether environmental, volitional, or genetic, because you have the same privileges and opportunities as every other believer. You are Royal Family of God! The only distinguishing factor among believers in the Royal Family of God is the “personnel assets,” i.e., different talents, different treasures, and a different spiritual gift. We all have the same amount of time and can serve God in any realm, as in Ecc 9:10, *“Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might”*; Col 3:23-24, *“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve”*; and Eph 6:6-7, *“Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”* You live in the dispensation of the Church, the Royal Family of God, and you have the same

privileges and opportunities to receive the conveyance of your escrow blessings as every other believer.

In the doctrine of selection, it is vital to understand that God is the author of life (not our parents!), and that He is in complete control of the circumstances of our birth. Gen 2:7 records the origin of the human race: *"Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."* Job 33:4 says, *"And the breath from God has created me [a human being], and the breath [soul life] of the Almighty gives me [human] life."* The "breath of God" is the source of life. This statement by Job is made long after the fall of man in the Garden, and states the principle of the origin of human life—human life comes from God, and only God has the power to create human life. We read in Isa 44:2, *"Thus says the Lord who created you, who formed you outside [separated from] the womb."* "From the womb" is the Hebrew prepositional phrase *mi beten*, which means separated from the womb, or out from the womb.

Because of the perfect justice of God, and because we are born spiritually dead through the imputation of Adam's sin, God must provide salvation for everyone to whom He gives soul life at birth. He provides redemption for all, as in Isa 44:24, *"Thus says the Lord [Jehovah], your redeemer, the One who formed you from the womb [not "in" the womb, but "outside" the womb], 'I, the Lord, am the maker of all things.'"*

When a woman becomes pregnant and a fetus grows inside her body, this is biological life, according to the Bible; it is not yet a person, because biological life in itself is not a human being. There must be a soul created by God and imputed to the biological life of the infant at birth, for human life to exist. God's creation of soul life *occurs at physical birth*, under the principle of *selection*. Man is the source of biological life through copulation, and he is also the source of the sin nature, located in the body. However, only God Himself can make that biological life a human being with a soul. At birth, God creates soul life and imputes it to biological life; at death, God removes the soul life from the biological life. For the believer, He takes that soul life to heaven. If God did not give soul life at birth, there would be no soul life, and no human existence.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, PART 4

The Boundaries of Human Life

Job 3:11-16, 10:18-19

08/01/04

Point 7 in our study of the Doctrine of Election deals with Selection and Election. At the point of physical birth, you come under the concept of selection, meaning God selected you to be a member of the human race. God is the inventor of human life, and He is the creator of all life. The Bible teaches that at the moment of physical birth, God imputes human life to the "format soul" and the individual then becomes alive; this is what we call "selection." Therefore, life has meaning, purpose, and definition for everyone, regardless of their environment, circumstances, gender, nationality, skin color, etc., Gal 3:28.

We read in Isa 44:2, *"Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb [not "in" the womb], who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; and you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.'" The phrase "from the womb" is the Hebrew word *mibeten*, which means "separated from the womb," or "out from the womb." The same word is used in Isa 44:24, *"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the Lord, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself, and spreading out the earth all alone.'"; and Isa 46:3, "Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, you who have been borne [carried] by Me from birth [not from "conception"], and have been carried from the womb." The Lord carries His people from birth. We see the same principle in Isa 49:1,5, "Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb [as opposed to "in the womb"]; from the body of My mother He named Me"... And now says the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, in order that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the Lord, and My God is My strength)..." Why would God call the child from birth, but not call the child in the womb? If the fetus were a person, he would have just as much intellect while still in the womb!**

Many religious preachers will quote Jer 1:5, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."* Notice the Lord said, *"Before I formed you in the womb."* This verse is simply referring to the foreknowledge of God knowing everything about us before our body is even formed in our mother's womb. There is no indication that a fetus has a soul while still in the womb. The "forming in the womb" has to do with the natural laws God has provided in copulation for the perpetuation of the human race.

In Psa 22:9-10 we are given our Lord's thoughts while on the Cross: *"Yet Thou [God the Father] art He who didst bring me forth from the womb; Thou didst make me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon Thee [God the Father] I was cast from birth [not from conception]; You have been my God from my mother's womb [not "in" my mother's womb]. The humanity of Christ actually trusted in God as a human being the moment after he was born, Heb 10:5, "Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, 'Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body [not an embryo or a fetus] Thou hast prepared for Me.'"*

There are many passages in the Word of God that tell us that a miscarriage has no life, but an infant who dies after birth goes into eternity. A fetus that dies in the womb never has a soul, but a baby that is born and then dies does have a soul. One such passage is Ecc 6:3-5, *"If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, however many they be, but his soul is not satisfied with good things, and he does not even have a proper burial, then I say, 'Better the miscarriage than he, for it [Solomon refers to the miscarriage as "it"] comes in futility and goes into obscurity; and its name is covered in obscurity. It never sees the sun and it never knows anything; it is better off than he.'"*

When Mary became pregnant by conception from the Holy Spirit to bring forth a human body for our Lord, Mat 1:20 tells us, *"Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,*

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” Notice our Lord’s future human body is called “that”; it is not called “He.” The definite article *to* in the neuter gender cannot refer to a person. Luk 1:35 supports this: *“And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called [not “is called”] the Son of God.”* When Luke refers to “the holy offspring,” he uses the definite article *to* in the neuter gender; in fact, the King James Bible translates Luk 1:35, *“And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”*

Exo 21:22 shows us how Jewish Jurisprudence dealt with this issue: *“If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury to the woman, the offender will surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand from him; therefore he will pay damages as the judge decides.”* There was no trial for murder and no capital punishment because a miscarriage is not a human being. The Word of God mandates capital punishment for murder, Gen 9:5-6, Exo 21:12, Num 35:30, Mat 26:53, Rom 13:3-4. But since there is only biological life, and not soul life in the fetus, there can be no death penalty for murder. Biological life without a soul is not a human being; it must emerge from the womb and receive soul life from God to become a human being. If the fetus died in the womb, God would not impute soul life.

When Job was complaining about his adversity in Job 10:18-19, he said, *“Why then hast Thou brought me out of the womb? Would that I had died and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been, carried from womb to tomb.”* Job is saying that if he had died in the womb, he would not even exist. In his bitterness, Job is asking why God ever let him become a human being.

Job 3:11-16 “Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me, and why the breasts, that I should suck? For now I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept then, I would have been at rest [in Paradise], with kings and with counselors of the earth, who rebuilt ruins for themselves; or with princes who had gold, who were filling their houses with silver. [If I died at birth, I would go to Paradise.] Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be, as infants that never saw light. [If I was a miscarriage, I would not exist.]”

The boundaries of human life are from birth to death, and this is the sphere in which the angelic conflict is being resolved. There is no resolution to the angelic conflict inside the womb or the tomb. God gives human life at birth, and takes it away at death. The womb is not a part of the angelic conflict, and it does not contain human life. And when legalistic Christians accuse a woman who as had an abortion of committing murder, they are arrogant and deceived. We have no right to place that kind of guilt on another person. This is not condoning abortion (there are many adverse affects from abortion in society); this is simply stating accurately what the Word of God has to say about the human lifespan.

Point 8: Election and the Sovereignty of God with the Free Will of Man. The sovereignty, or free will, of God and the free will of man co-exist in human history in order to resolve the angelic conflict. God preserved free will in both angelic creatures and in mankind, and He programmed the divine decrees according to how each free will would function. The decrees of God are His eternal, unchangeable will regarding the future existence of all events and the precise manner and order of their occurrence. This is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, past, present, and future. Therefore, the decrees of God are His chosen and adopted plan for all His works.

In the divine decrees, both the sovereignty of God and the free will of man operate simultaneously. In eternity past, God made one sovereign decision with many aspects. That one decision included providing for you your very own election and predestination related to His plan for your life. In the divine decree is a pre-creation record of each one of our lives, and it reads either

“winner” or “loser,” depending on your decisions. Everything you think, why you think it, and the environment in which you think it, was all known to God in eternity past; everything in life is a chain of cause-and-effect events. Every last minute detail was known by God long before it happened, Luk 12:6-7, *“Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.”*

Although it may not always appear that your life has been blended perfectly together by God, in heaven you will understand that it was. God is perfect, and therefore He gave you life at the exact time that He knew would be the best time and environment for you personally. This includes your parents, the color of your skin, your gender, and everything else about you. You are unique from every other member of the human race, under the doctrine of selection. Therefore we have no excuse for becoming a loser; we have equal privilege and equal opportunity under election and predestination. The sovereignty of God willed for you to be a winner, but you can reject His will.

Losers are under divine discipline, 1Co 16:22; they still have their names recorded in the Lamb’s book of life, but they are omitted from the honors list in eternity. Rev 3:5 describes the winner believer: *“He who overcomes [the winner] shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name [title] from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”* The Greek noun translated “name” is *onoma*, which means fame, reputation, or title. This is a reference to the title the loser believer was elected to have, being erased because of his negative decisions in time. We are warned to not lose our spiritual momentum in 2Jo 1:8-9.

God the Father as the Grantor deposited into escrow greater blessings for time and eternity, and they are on deposit with the escrow officer, our Lord Jesus Christ. When we meet the conditions of the escrow (reaching spiritual maturity), then our Lord conveys these blessings to us in time. Then, at the judgment seat of Christ, He conveys greater blessings for the eternal state to the winner. For the loser, these blessings remain on deposit forever as a memorial to lost opportunity to execute the predesigned plan of God. The Christian loser fails to use the *power options* (the filling of the Spirit and metabolization of doctrine) that have been made available to him. The loser is a born-again believer in Jesus Christ who has the wrong priorities and spends his life in the cosmic system. He has a right pastor, but because of cosmic involvement, he never sees his right pastor, or he only visits occasionally, or he even rejects him. However, the loser continues to receive logistical grace support and blessing while on earth.

Instead of becoming an invisible hero, the loser is bored, dissatisfied, preoccupied with self, arrogant, frustrated, distracted, unstable, and unable to utilize the ten problem-solving devices. The Christian loser has the option of rebound, which means restoration to fellowship with God, recovery of the filling of the Spirit, and the continuation of the spiritual life. Following are characteristics of the Christian loser:

1. “Drifting off course from grace,” Gal 5:4.
2. “Coming short of the grace of God,” Heb 12:15.
3. The “tormented soul” of 2Pe 2:7-8.
4. The “lukewarm believer” of Rev 3:15-16.
5. The “shipwrecked believer” of 1Ti 1:19.
6. “Under the body of death,” Rom 7:24-25.

The principle of election reveals to us the fantastic opportunities and privileges that God has for us. The principle of selection teaches us that He has chosen the time, place, and circumstances in which we live on this earth, and that He has determined exactly when our life in time begins and ends. This doctrine should give every Church-age believer great confidence in their spiritual life and their relationship with God.

NEW ENGLAND BIBLE CONFERENCE 2004

Your Personal Sense of Destiny

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

08/08/04

Our personal sense of destiny answers vital questions such as: “*Why you have been created and placed on this earth?*” or, “*Why does God leave us on earth after our salvation?*” In discovering our destiny, our motivation is crucial; we must learn how to see life from the divine viewpoint, Isa 55:8-9. We begin with a simplistic assertion—through understanding your personal sense of destiny, you will know God’s purpose, and you will understand how all the pieces of your life fit together, Rom 8:28-31.

God knew what He was doing from beginning, and He decided how to shape the lives of those who would believe on Jesus Christ. If you believe that God has a plan and purpose for your life, this divine perspective will reduce stress in your life, clarify your decisions, increase your contentment, and prepare you for eternity. The doctrine of election teaches *equal privilege* and *equal opportunity* for all. You have the same opportunity as everyone else to advance to spiritual maturity and glorify God in your personal sense of destiny. If you have the right priorities, you will have freedom, Joh 8:32. If you have the wrong priorities you will have a life of bondage, as in Rom 7:24.

Everything above and below, visible and invisible, begins with God, and finds its purpose in Him, Col 1:16-17. You have been created for Him. Your personal sense of destiny is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, Luk 14:26-27, Joh 1:13, Isa 43:7, Rev 4:11. The search for the purpose of life has perplexed humanity for thousands of years because we begin at the wrong starting point—ourselves! Focusing on ourselves will never reveal our true purpose, Rom 7:18. You did not create yourself, so how can you tell yourself what you were created for? You were made *by* God and *for* God, and until we understand this, life will never make sense, Isa 45:12. It is only “in God” that we discover our true origin, identity, meaning, and significance; every other path is a dead end. God has assigned to you a number of days to live on this earth, Psa 90:12, 31:15. God has given us an assignment, and He has also given us a certain amount of time to fulfill this destiny.

King Solomon wrote in Ecc 3:1-8, “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven. A time to give birth, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot what is planted. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build up. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to throw stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to shun embracing. A time to search, and a time to give up as lost; a time to keep, and a time to throw away. A time to tear apart, and a time to sew together; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?” Without understanding God’s divine purpose, we will conclude as Solomon did, that there is no profit in our work.

The concept of time is so interwoven into our daily lives... “What time is it?” “I don’t have time.” “How much time will it take?” “Don’t waste your time on that!” God gives you a certain amount of *time*, that you might use it for His glory, Eph 5:16. Every day we live is a gracious gift from God, and each day we must have time set aside for our relationship with Him. The only time we have to honor God is the number of days He has given us in the Christian life, Psa 90:12, Jam 4:13-15. The fact that even the unbeliever lives another day reveals the faithfulness of God, Lam 3:22-23. We need Bible doctrine daily, Job 23:12. If we do not “purchase” time by taking in doctrine consistently, we actually lose days, through divine discipline, Psa 102:23. Therefore, we are told to buy back the time in Eph 5:16-17. Time is precious. It is irretrievable. You can never get back the time you wasted; it is gone forever. The greatest use of one’s life is to spend it on something that will outlast it. God’s timing is perfect and if you are in fellowship with Him, you will have peace of mind with everything you do.

God has given us an assignment, namely to fulfill our personal sense of destiny, and God has also give us a certain amount of time to fulfill this destiny. After wasting most of his life, Solomon asks in Ecc 3:9, *“What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?”* The word “toils” is the Hebrew *amel*, meaning monotonous and wearisome labor or work. It connotes doing the same thing again and again until you are sick of it, and tired and exhausted. It describes an individual whose life is boring and tiresome, with no meaning, purpose, or definition.

1. Understanding your personal sense of destiny means to appreciate time as a gracious gift from the Lord, Psa 90:12.
2. Our attitude toward time should be respect (not cynicism), Eph 5:14.
3. Life has no meaning, purpose, or definition if we mock the details of life and ignore our personal sense of destiny.
4. Without an understanding of our personal sense of destiny, time becomes a form of slavery and bondage, from which there is no escape but death.
5. Bondage to time means no capacity for life, love, and happiness.
6. Your personal sense of destiny is a provision from God, not a problem to be ignored.
7. For the believer who understands his personal sense of destiny, the most insignificant of tasks becomes a place of service to the Lord, Luk 19:17.
8. There is no such thing as a monotonous job, only monotonous people!

Solomon continues in Ecc 3:10, *“I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.”* Solomon has been wasting time in reversionism, and neglecting doctrine now will catch up with you in the future. Solomon arrives at a conclusion in Ecc 3:11a, *“He has made everything appropriate in its time.”* Our problem is not so much what happens, but our perspective after it happens. When something occurs that we did not want, we ask, “What kind of God would allow this to happen?” What we miss is our part in the angelic conflict and the fulfillment of our personal sense of destiny.

Solomon continues with a second conclusion in Ecc 3:11b, “He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.” God has placed a deep yearning in man for that which is eternal, as we see in David in Psa 42:1. It is a delicate and sensitive desire that can be snuffed out by hardness of the heart. However, the more this desire is fed, the stronger it becomes. This desire for the eternal means that every member of the human race has a divine destination for their life desired by God, 2Pe 3:9, 1Ti 2:4. The idea that mankind can find happiness apart from God is vain and futile. Most people never really live, but are always hoping to really live some day. Many people try to use God for their own self-purpose, but this is doomed to failure. You were made for God, not vice versa, and life is about letting God use you for His purposes, Joh 3:30.

The easiest way to discover the purpose of an invention is to ask its creator. The same is true for discovering the purpose of life—ask God! God has not left us in the dark to wonder about the true meaning of life. He has clearly revealed His purposes for our lives through the Bible. The Bible is our Owner’s Manual, explaining why we are alive, how life works, what to avoid, and what to expect in the future. God is not just the starting point of your life; He is the source of it. It is in Christ that we discover who we are and what we are living for, Act 17:28, Col 1:16-18, 2:9-13. Long before we first heard of the Lord Jesus Christ, He had His eye on us. He designed us for glory, and He is working out that which He has placed within us, Phi 1:6. If you pray for strength that you might achieve, He may make you weak that you might obey. If you pray for health that you might do great things, He may give you afflictions that you might do even greater things. You are who you are for a reason, and you are part of an intricate plan, Isa 44:2.

Solomon said in Ecc 4:4, “And I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind.” Solomon

observed that the basic motive for success is the driving force of envy and jealousy. Everyone's life is driven by something. Most dictionaries define the verb "drive" as "to guide, to control, or to direct." What is the driving force in your life? Right now you may be driven by a problem, a pressure, or a deadline. You may be driven by a painful memory, a haunting fear, or a spiritual conviction. There are thousands of circumstances and emotions that can drive your life.

1. Guilt. People spend their entire lives running from regrets and hiding their shame, trying to please others. Trying to please people can destroy your relationship with God, Joh 12:43. Guilt-driven people are usually manipulated by memories, allowing their past to control their future. Guilt *separates* a person from God. Guilty people unconsciously punish themselves.
 - a. Parents use guilt as a method of manipulating their children, rather than legitimate discipline and correction.
 - b. Satan accuses God's people to bring guilt upon them, Rev 12:10.
 - c. Sin can make one feel so guilty that he hides from God, Gen 3:7-10.
 - d. Being too concerned about what others say produces guilt, Joh 12:42-43.
 - e. Receiving something you did not earn can produce guilt; many people have difficulty accepting gifts.
 - f. Guilty people are often unable to say "no," and will do anything that anyone asks them.
 - g. People experience guilt due to feelings of inadequacy or an inferiority complex, 2Co 10:12.
 - h. Many people cannot accept their own weaknesses, 2Co 10:12.
 - i. It is possible to experience guilt, not only from the evil that we do, but also from the good we neglect to do, Jam 4:17. When Cain sinned, his guilt severed him from God's presence, and God said, "*You will be a restless wanderer on the earth,*" Gen 4:12.

This describes most people today—wandering through life without a purpose. We are products of our past, but we do not have to be its prisoners. God's purpose is not limited by your past; He turned a murderer named Moses into a leader and a coward named Gideon into a courageous hero, and He can do amazing things with the rest of your life as well. God specializes in giving people a fresh start. God holds nothing against you, and there is happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven, Psa 32:1. There is relief for those who have confessed their sins, Pro 28:13.

2. Resentment and anger. Instead of releasing their pain through forgiveness, people rehearse it over and over again in their minds. They are always thinking about the negative, in contrast to Phi 4:8. Those who have hurt you in the past cannot continue to hurt you now, unless you hold on to the pain through resentment.
3. Fear. Fears may be a result of a traumatic experience, unrealistic expectations, or even genetic predisposition. Regardless of the cause, fear-driven people often miss great opportunities because they are afraid to take risks. Fear is a self-imposed prison, 1Jo 4:18.
4. Materialism. The desire to acquire "stuff" can become the goal of one's life as he ignores his personal sense of destiny. This drive to always want more is based on the misconceptions that possessions will make us more happy and secure, as illustrated in the popular parable of the prodigal son in Luk 15.

The prodigal son is at home, but he is dissatisfied because he does not understand his personal sense of destiny. The father in this parable represents God the Father, and his two sons represent believers; this is a doctrinal message for born-again believers. We read in Luk 15:12, "*And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he divided his wealth between them.'*" The prodigal son accepted the blessings of the Father (as all men do who live on God's earth), while turning his back on his Father (as men do when they reject fellowship with God), and the Father made no attempt to stop him. It was the

son who walked away from the Father, *not* the Father from the son. We draw away from God; He does not draw away from us.

In Luk 15:14-20a, *"Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need."* [This is divine discipline, which God brings on every one of His children who goes astray from his personal sense of destiny.] *And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.* [This is the depths to which the prodigal son had sunk.] *And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.* [This is a picture of what happens when a believer goes back to the lifestyle from which God has rescued him.] *But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my Father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my Father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight [rebound]; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.' And he got up and came to his Father."*

God knows every heartache and every difficulty we will ever face. With our Father, the only issue is coming back home, Luk 15:20b-23, *"But while he was still a long way off, his Father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired men.' But the Father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry.'" This is what happens in rebound—forgiveness of guilt, and restoration to fellowship with God. This is the divine attitude of grace. Rather than punishing the son for his sins, the father has a party.*

Knowing your personal sense of destiny (1) gives meaning to your life, (2) gives you hope and a good future (Jer 29:11), (3) simplifies your life, (4) focuses your life and concentrates your energy on what is important (you become effective by being selective), and (5) prepares you for eternity.

Many people spend their lives trying to create a lasting legacy on earth. However, all achievements are eventually surpassed, records are broken, reputations fade, and tributes are forgotten. You were put on earth to prepare for eternity, 2Co 5:4-8. One day you will stand before God, and we can surmise that God will ask us two crucial questions—"What did you do with my Son, Jesus Christ?" and "What did you do with what I gave you?" Death is not your termination, but your transition into eternity, and there are eternal consequences to what you do on earth.

When you live in light of eternity, your values radically change. God has given us glimpses of eternity in His Word, and we know that right now God is preparing an eternal home for us. In heaven, we will be reunited with loved ones, released from all pain and suffering, rewarded for our faithfulness on earth, and reassigned to do work that we will love. We will enjoy unbroken fellowship with God, and He will enjoy us for an unlimited, endless forever. One day the Lord Jesus Christ will say, *"Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world,"* Mat 25:34.

God has a personal sense of destiny for your life on earth, but it does not end here. His plan involves far more than the few decades you will spend on this planet. It is more than "the opportunity of a lifetime." God offers you an opportunity *beyond* your lifetime. God's plans endure forever; His personal sense of destiny for your life will last for all eternity.

Life on earth is a test. This life metaphor is seen in stories throughout the Bible. God continually tests people's character, faith, obedience, love, integrity, and loyalty, 2Co 13:5. Words like trials, temptations, refining, and testing occur more than 200 times in the Bible. Character is developed and revealed by tests, and we are always being tested. God constantly watches your response to people, problems, success, conflicts, illness, disappointments, etc. Your ultimate test concerning your personal sense of destiny will occur at the judgment seat of Christ, 1Co 3:13.

You will be tested by major changes, delayed promises, impossible problems, undeserved criticism, and senseless tragedies. When you understand that life is a test, you realize that nothing is insignificant in your life. Even the smallest incident has significance for your character development. Every day is an important day, and every second is a growth opportunity to deepen your character, to demonstrate love, or to depend on God. God never allows the tests you face to be greater than the grace He gives you to handle them, 1Co 10:13. Some tests seem overwhelming, while others you may not even notice. However, they all have eternal implications.

The Lord leaves us on earth to fulfill a personal sense of destiny designed by Him. Once you are saved, God intends to use you for His purpose and desires, because you belong to Him. A “non-serving Christian” is a contradiction in terms. Each of us has a role to play, 1Co 12:27, and every role is important; there is no small service to God. Some are visible and some are behind the scenes, but all are valuable. “Small” or “hidden” ministries often make the greatest difference. Jesus Christ came to *serve* and to *give*. And these two words should define our life on earth.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, PART 5

The Universal Priesthood

1 Peter 2:5-9

08/22/04

Point 10: The Equal Privilege of Election Manifested by the Universal Priesthood of Every Church-age Believer. All Church-age believers are priests in the plan of God, Gal 3:28. Under your royal priesthood, God's plan for you in the Church-age is totally unique. Never before the Church-age and never after the Rapture is there another universal priesthood. Therefore, this is the dispensation of personal responsibility.

A priest is one who represents people before God, and in the Church-age, every believer represents *himself* before God, establishing *privacy*, Rom 14:4-5. It is not our business to interfere in the lives of others. God can correct His children without our help. Each individual is free to follow the convictions of his own conscience, Rom 14:6-10,22.

This means you are responsible for every thought you think, every motive you have, every good or bad decision you make. God is holding you responsible for your own decisions because He made you a priest so that you could represent yourself before Him. In order to properly represent yourself before God, it is vital to understand what you have been *elected to receive*. What gives God pleasure is being able to give to you the fantastic blessings He has elected you to receive (Acts 20:35).

The Apostle Peter describes the royal priesthood of the believer in 1Pe 2:5, "*You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*" You are to present yourself as a building stone for the construction of a sanctuary filled with life, in which you will serve as a holy priest. You are the ones chosen by God, elected for the high calling of the royal priesthood—elected to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for Him, 1Pe 2:6-9. Every Church-age believer has a direct line to God, which means he represents himself before God, he evaluates himself, and he offers prayer for himself.

The privacy of your priesthood is based on the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. You have privacy so that you can learn Bible doctrine for yourself. However, you can never learn anything if you are not objective, or if you reject authority, or if you are controlled by arrogance. To learn Bible doctrine requires *objectivity*. This is why the local church should be an environment where believers can gather together and their privacy is respected. This means both your sins and your strengths should be kept private. The pastor-teacher, as the final authority in the local church, must protect the privacy of all believer-priests in his congregation by disciplining or removing those who violate others' privacy. You were formed for God's family, and your personal sense of destiny under the principle of election is to identify with His family.

The Lord Jesus Christ said Joh 15:5, "*I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.*" The Lord Jesus Christ makes us one body, connected to each other, Rom 12:5. God is the One who made all things, and all things are for His glory, and His will is to have many children share His glory. The entire Bible is based upon the principle of God building a family who will love Him, honor Him, and reign with Him forever. Because God is love, He treasures relationships. This is why He identifies Himself in family terms—Father, Son, and Spirit. The Trinity is in fact God's relationship to Himself. God did not need another family; He desired one, therefore He devised a plan to create us, bring us into His family, and share with us all that He has.

Your spiritual family is far more important than your physical family, because it will last forever. Our families on earth are gifts from God, but they are temporary and fragile, often broken by divorce, distance, and inevitably death. On the other hand, our spiritual family, our relationship with

other believers, will continue throughout eternity. It is an unbreakable union and a permanent bond. The moment you were spiritually born into God's family, you were given some astounding birthday gifts, Gal 4:7. As children of God we share in the family fortune; we are given the riches of his grace, kindness, patience, glory, wisdom, power, and mercy. In eternity we will inherit even more, Eph 1:18.

God does not want you to depend on someone else for counsel; He wants you to become spiritually self-sustained. The royal priest's "self-improvement" is based on perception of doctrine, not upon the advice and counsel of others. The royal priesthood is designed by God to function in one's own system of thinking, and no believer can think, apply doctrine, or solve problems through the mind or the personality of another Christian. Under the privacy of your priesthood, you have the right to assemble with other believers in a group, where your privacy is respected, to learn Bible doctrine. The only human dependence of the royal priesthood is the divine provision of your very own pastor-teacher.

You have to motivate yourself; you cannot depend on someone else's leadership. If you depend on them, then you are "borrowing" their inspiration, which will only stifle your own motivation. When you are under adversity, you will need your own motivation to keep driving forward. Your pastor is neither a counselor nor a crutch to lean on. Your priesthood demands that you live your own life as unto the Lord and take the responsibility for your own decisions, 1Co 4:5. This is your equal privilege under election. Do not bully other believers, bring up their failures, or criticize their faults (unless, of course, you want the same treatment). The critical spirit has a tendency to "boomerang" on us, Mat 7:1-3.

The pastor-teacher should communicate and teach doctrine faithfully, and his role is described in Eph 4:11-12, *"And He gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."*

The three-fold purpose of the pastor-teacher is to (1) equip and train the Royal Family for combat, (2) equip them for the work of service (preparing believers to function in their spiritual gift), and (3) the edification of the body, which means to study, teach, discipline (in public), reprimand (in private), and encourage by steadfastness in doctrine. What God provides is perfect, and one of His gifts is your very own pastor-teacher. The gift is perfect, but the man who possesses it is not, and in warning us not to elevate the man, Paul tells us in 1Co 1:26-27, *"Not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish ones of the world to shame the wise."*

Act 20:28 teaches that the Holy Spirit assigns a certain pastor to a certain congregation: *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."* The phrase "has made" is the Greek verb tithemi, meaning to place, appoint, or assign a certain man over a certain flock of believers. The words "flock" and "church" are both nouns in the singular, illustrating that there is one pastor for one congregation. This verse teaches (1) one flock and one shepherd over that flock, (2) one church and one overseer over that church, and (3) one pastor assigned or appointed by the Holy Spirit.

1Pe 5:3 teaches that there are certain believers who are allotted or assigned to a certain pastor: *"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, or being driven and forced from pressure, but voluntarily [willingly], according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; not lording it over those allotted to your charge [pastors who violate the royal priesthood of the believer, the bullies behind the pulpits], but proving to be examples to the flock."* The phrase "allotted to your charge" is the Greek word kleros, and it refers to (1) those assigned to the charge of a certain pastor, (2) those allotted or distributed to a certain pastor, or (3) "those whose care and oversight has been assigned to one Presbyter," or pastor-teacher (The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, page 349). "Examples" is the

Greek noun tupos, meaning a mark, impression, or pattern. Through his teaching, a faithful pastor leaves a pattern and example for his flock to follow.

Faithful teaching from your pastor demands your faith perception, metabolization, and application of that teaching to your own life as a royal priest. You cannot advance to maturity on your own; someone must train you. Life in the predesigned plan of God is spiritual freedom under the filling of the Spirit, as well as spiritual independence in the framework of your royal priesthood. Major functions of the royal priesthood include:

1. Rebound as the basic technique for the recovery of fellowship.
2. A consistent prayer life.
3. Perception, metabolization, and application of doctrine to your *own* experience.
4. Worship.
5. The sacrifices of life, which is your doctrinal momentum leading to spiritual adulthood and the manner of operating in virtue-love.
6. Divine viewpoint mental attitude from metabolized doctrine.
7. Self-motivation from metabolized doctrine.

When our Lord comes back, He will expose and place in evidence all our inner motives and purposes. Only then will any one of us hear *"Well done, good and faithful servant!"* God will not permit anyone to take His place in judging or evaluating other believers. In Rom 8:33, we read, *"Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or trouble, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* Who has the audacity and stupidity to tangle with God by hurting those who are called the "apple of His eye" (Zec 2:8)? Who dares to attack God by attacking those who are called His "jewels" (Mal 3:17) and His "crown of glory" (Isa 62:3)?

In Rom 8:33, the word "elect" is the noun *eklektos*, which refers to those *elected to privilege*. Since we have been elected to privilege and are members of the Royal Family of God, we are responsible to God. We are to live our life as unto the Lord, in the privacy of our royal priesthood. God is the one who will do the judging, no one else. Our salvation and election do not depend upon human opinion or human observation.

Point 11: The Equal Opportunity under Election: the Royal Ambassadorship and the Divine Provision of Logistical Grace Support and Blessing. Two aspects of logistical grace are transferred from the justice of God to His indwelling righteousness in you: (1) *logistical support* to sustain you and (2) *logistical blessing*, which is additional blessing beyond the bare necessity of support. Logistical support and blessing are provided for winners and losers alike, because all believers possess the perfect righteousness of God. This gives all believers equal opportunity.

The righteousness of God demands that the justice of God sustain your life, even throughout every stupid mistake you ever make. The righteousness of God requires that the justice of God keep you alive to fulfill your personal destiny, to which you have been elected. All of us are alive by the grace of God. The justice of God is the initiator of grace, and sends undeserved blessings to all believers, winners and losers alike. This is one of many reasons why the wicked prosper, due to their equal privilege in God's plan. We are not blessed because we perform Christian service, or because of anything we can do, or anything we are.

Our Lord instructs us in Mat 6:25, "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? There is far more to your life than the food you eat and the clothes wear. Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and do not get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will deal with whatever difficult times are ahead.

Point 12: Conclusion. The equal privilege and equal opportunity of election means there never has been and never will be a Church-age believer who did not have exactly the same privilege and same opportunity to fulfill God's plan, to reach spiritual maturity, and to receive the fantastic escrow blessings provided for him by God the Father in eternity past.

In Rev 14:13, John writes, "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!"' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.'" When the believer dies, what follows him are his deeds and works. This will determine whether he lived in his election or rejected his election and his predestination, which enables us to fulfill our election. Predestination is the provision of a plan, a personal destiny from the sovereign will of God for the Royal Family. Predestination provides equal privilege (union with Christ) and equal opportunity (logistical blessings) to execute the predesigned plan of God.

1. Election means that God wills the highest and the best for you as a believer, which was deposited for you in escrow in eternity past.
2. Every believer has a tremendous escrow account in heaven, 1Pe 1:4, but the very fact that most believers will not receive the transfer of their escrow blessings does not cancel out these blessings. They remain on deposit forever as a memorial to the justice of God.
3. People often ask, "What is God's will for my life?" God's will is for you to withdraw as much as you can from your escrow account. He has the greatest blessings—blessings we cannot even imagine.
4. The next question is usually "How can I get these fantastic blessings?" It is *our choices* toward Bible doctrine and God's plan that determine whether or not we receive our escrow. All the instructions are laid out for us in the Word of God.
5. Election does not mean a violation of human volition; it means that the highest and best was previously deposited in escrow for every believer in eternity past. God not only wills the highest and best for each believer but, at the same time, He provides equal privilege and equal opportunity to attain these blessings. Equal privilege means that you are in union with Christ and His church. Equal opportunity means that you have logistical grace support. There is no excuse for any believer in all the Church-age for not receiving phenomenal blessings.
6. You have been elected to *privilege*. Every believer has the same privileges and opportunities.
7. Never before and never again in human history has every believer been made a priest. You are a priest so that you can capitalize on all that God has prepared for those who love Him.
8. Never before in history has any believer received the enabling and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. And why do you have enabling and indwelling power from the Spirit? So that you can advance spiritually and capitalize on the blessings reserved for you. The only way you can withdraw from your escrow account is to advance to maturity.
9. The fact that you have been elected to special privilege and opportunity is the greatest "motivational challenge" you will ever face. With election comes a very important *responsibility*. You must now exercise the daily use of your volition to advance to maturity. Otherwise, you will never get beyond the lesser blessings of time and eternity.
10. There is no excuse for any believer to fail to receive these fantastic blessings. You have been given the greatest opportunity and privileges of any individual in the human race. You are the soul that God has made, Isa 57:16. God Himself, in His perfect sovereign decision, has given you life.

The very fact that God breathed life into your soul reveals His approval in selecting you to come into the world at the exact time and place that you were born. God has a plan just for you. He *selected* you at physical birth and *elected* you at regeneration (your second birth). He ordained you to be a believer with equal privilege and equal opportunity to receive blessings that stagger the imagination.

SPIRITUAL METABOLISM

The Words were found, and I ate them...

Jeremiah 15:16

08/29/04

As we continue our verse-by-verse study of the book of *Philippians*, we have now covered Phi 4:8 in detail. Our corrected translation reads: “From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair and right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation], whatever personal loves exist, whatever is commendable, if there is any virtue [and there is], and if anything worthy of praise [and there is], be concentrating on these things.” We are now ready for Phi 4:9.

Phi 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

In verses 9-10, we will see the true means of spiritual advance—the function of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. Once doctrine becomes your number one priority, you must then find the place where doctrine is taught. In order for doctrine to be taught correctly and accurately there must be two factors—a right pastor and a right congregation; they must meet on a common meeting ground, the classroom of the local church. In verse 9, we will see the congregation, and in verse 10, the pastor.

In Phi 4:9 the phrase “the things” is the Greek relative pronoun *ha'*, which refers to doctrine. It refers literally to the doctrines, principles, concepts, and policies of God, preserved in the canon of scripture. These are the doctrines that have been transferred from the Bible to the hearts of believers through the function of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. After the relative pronoun *ha'* comes the conjunction *kai*, and since this word is used twice in the sentence, it should be translated “also.”

Phi 4:9 These things [doctrinal principles] also you have learned...

The Greek verb for “have learned” is *emathete*, meaning to learn from someone who has the authority to teach, to learn under strict academic discipline. It has many other meanings such as to increase one’s knowledge, be increased in knowledge, and to learn by examination or observation. It also means to learn by use and practice, to acquire the habit of something, and to be accustomed to something. The mature believer has learned the things mentioned in this epistle that Paul has been teaching.

Traditional forms of education do not prepare people to deal with the issues of the day. Those with a high IQ and an impressive educational background often do not have the answers to life’s problems, because those answers are found only in the pages of God’s Word. *Emathete* means “disciples,” an old English word for a person learning doctrine under discipline. The twelve disciples were under the Lord’s discipline; some of them were weirdo’s, and one of them was an unbeliever, but they were under His authority and they were under strict discipline. Therefore, no pastor should ever be shocked with the kind of students sitting in his congregation. After years of faithful Bible teaching, every congregation will have personalities like these:

- Peter – impulsive
- Andrew – open-minded
- James – fanatical
- John – passionate
- Philip – inquisitive
- Bartholomew – composed
- Matthew – humble
- Thomas – pessimistic

- James – quiet
- Simon the Zealot – strong-willed
- Judas, the son of James – intense
- Judas Iscariot – the traitor

We should never be shocked at the different types of individuals in any local assembly. This is why the Bible warns us against those who subtly and quietly sow discord and spread strife among brothers, Pro 6:19.

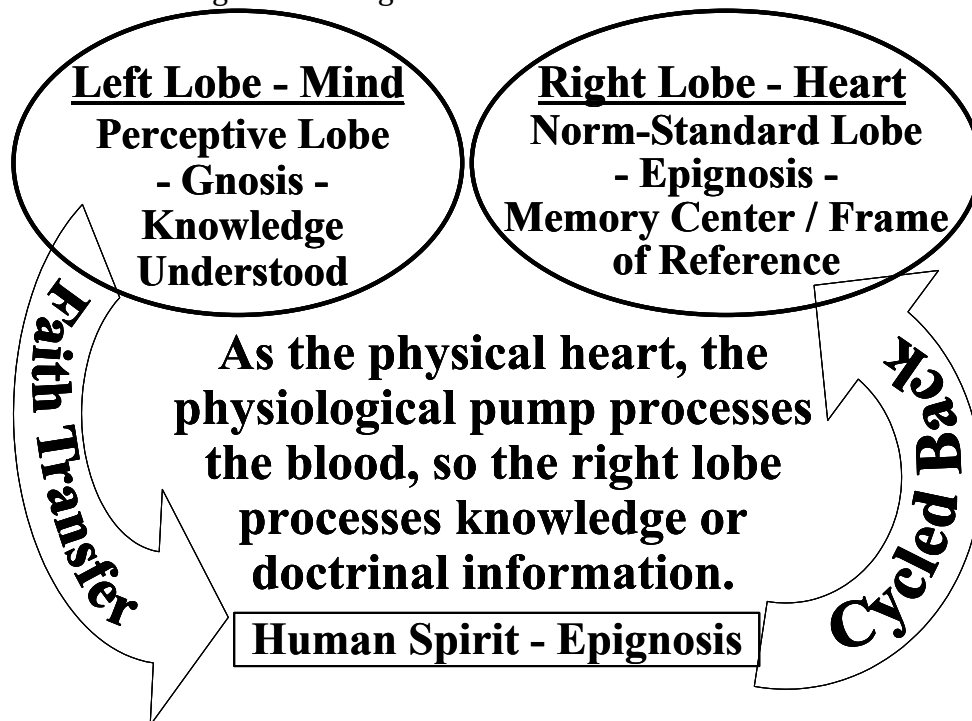
Phi 4:9 These things [these doctrinal principles] also you have learned [from a teacher, under strict academic discipline] and received...

“Received” is the Greek verb *paralambano*; *para* means beside or by the side of, and *lambano* means to take or receive to one’s side, to take or to receive to one’s self. This word implies agreement and approval, and therefore acceptance, and is correctly translated here to receive, or to accept. It reveals the difference between *gnosis* (knowledge) and *epignosis* (metabolization of *gnosis*, resulting in wisdom).

Gnosis means academic knowledge, and it refers to knowledge in the left lobe of the soul, which is called the *nous* (the mind) in the Greek New Testament. *Epignosis* means metabolized doctrine, and it refers to doctrine in the right lobe of the soul, called the *kardia* (the heart).

Just as the physical heart processes the blood, so the right lobe processes knowledge, doctrinal information. It is one thing for a believer to *know* doctrine, but it is another thing entirely to truly *understand* it and have it ready for use at any time. Knowing is never enough; before you can grow in doctrine, you must understand it. In other words, you cannot grow from what you know; you can only grow from what you truly understand. You can only apply what you understand, and you can only teach what you understand.

Understanding is *epignosis*; knowledge is simply *gnosis*. *Gnosis* is the staging area, but it is not the utilization of doctrine. Some doctrinal believers can “parrot back” certain things they have heard, but this does mean they have any understanding. It is when we receive *epignosis* doctrine in the right lobe that we are understanding it and using it.



The Doctrine of Spiritual Metabolism

Point 1: Definitions.

1. Metabolism is defined the system of physical and chemical processes occurring within a living cell or organism that are necessary for the maintenance of life.
2. In metabolism, some substances are broken down to yield energy for vital processes, while other substances that are necessary for life are produced.
3. Metabolism is the chemical changes in living cells by which energy is provided for vital processes and activities. Through the metabolism of food and oxygen, new material is assimilated to repair waste material in living cells.
4. Metabolism refers to both intake and absorption of food, as well as the process of respiration by which oxygen is made available to tissues for the multiple chemical transformations needed for the physical body to function properly.

We do not earn or deserve this process taking place in the natural realm, nor do we earn or deserve it in the spiritual realm. It is strictly a matter of the grace of God allowing this process to work for all mankind, believers and unbelievers.

There are two functions of metabolism in the natural realm, which have application in the spiritual realm.

1. Anabolism comes from the Greek word *anabole*, which refers to the process of building up, as in 2Co 10:8, *"For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame."*
2. Catabolism comes from the Greek word *katabole*, which refers to the process of tearing down, as in 2Ti 4:2, *"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."*

Metabolism as a medical term includes all the body processes by which matter, either organic or inorganic, is utilized for growth, repair, and maintenance. In spiritual metabolism, we have the process by which Bible doctrine is utilized for growth, repair, and maintenance.

- For growth: 2Pe 3:18, *"But grow by means of the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*
- For repair: Psa 19:7, *"The doctrine of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul."*
- For maintenance: Psa 40:11, *"Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth will continually preserve me."*

The metabolic processes by which oxygen is supplied to the neurons of the brain is what enables us to think. This a fantastic analogy to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Physical metabolism is analogous to the different stages of perception and metabolization of Bible doctrine in operation.

To survive spiritually, we must "eat" the Word, Jer 15:16, *"Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts."* Just as in physical metabolism, the same processes take place in spiritual metabolism. In anabolism, the building-up process, doctrine provides momentum in our spiritual lives. In catabolism, the tearing-down process, doctrine tears down our flesh, providing discernment, challenging us, and destroying the human viewpoint in our lives. As we can see, metabolism is an excellent analogy to the perception and metabolization of Bible doctrine to the spiritual life.

There are two categories of metabolism in medicine. First, there is the metabolism of air, in which air is carried into the body through inhalation. Air hits the epiglottis, where it triggers the traffic system that opens the trachea and shuts off the esophagus (which leads to the stomach). Air is not metabolized in the stomach but in the lungs, therefore the esophagus is shut off. In the metabolism of air, oxygen is taken from the air and entered into the bloodstream, while carbon dioxide is exhaled. This occurs even while you sleep, because you have an involuntary respiratory center where carbon dioxide builds up in the blood and pulls the trigger, causing you to inhale air. This automatic breathing device is located in the brain stem, so that even in your sleep, the grace and protection of God is at work. And spiritual metabolism is no different, Pro 3:21-24, *"My son, let them*

[principles of doctrine] *not depart from your sight; keep sound wisdom and discretion, so they will be life to your soul, and adornment to your neck. Then you will walk in your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.*"

Whether in the natural realm or the spiritual realm, this is all courtesy of the grace of God, for there is no talent, ability, or credit on the part of man to produce this function. It is a *system* provided by God and therefore a provision from the grace of God. It all began with the first mention principle in Gen 2:7, "*Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*" It is the breath of God that created this function in man.

Just as physical metabolism is non-meritorious, so is the metabolization of Bible doctrine; faith is a non-meritorious system of perception. This is why the Bible says in 2Ti 3:16, "*All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness*"; and in Eph 4:23, "*That you be renewed by means of the breathing of your soul.*"

When a person takes a deep breath, he can inhale as much as 300 CC's of air. With maximum effort, he can exhale about half of this (150 CC's). What remains in his lungs is called "residual oxygen," i.e., metabolized air. In the spiritual analogy, there is always a certain amount of doctrine you hear that is not immediately metabolized at the time you hear it. You can only take in so much information at a time, which is why doctrines have to be repeated. So, the metabolism of air is analogous to the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit inside the predesigned plan of God, metabolizing doctrine in our souls. Just as the Holy Spirit metabolized the *gnosis* gospel you heard, so He metabolizes the *gnosis* doctrine you learn.

Perception of doctrine is the function of the believer in his own mentality with the help of his mentor God the Holy Spirit, but the metabolizing of that doctrine is the function of the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Grace is involved in both air and food metabolism just as grace is involved in spiritual metabolism. Oxygen and other gases reside in stable form in the atmosphere around us, which is analogous to logistical and undeserved grace.

In the metabolism of food, food enters the mouth and hits the epiglottis. This time the traffic signal closes the trachea, and the esophagus is opened and food enters the stomach. In the stomach, sugar is broken down into various materials necessary for sustaining energy in life, such as glucose, fructose, and dextrose, and these travel to the brain and provide energy for the brain to print out information on the neurons. And this is all grace.

Metabolism is the sum total of the process in the building up of protoplasm and its destruction, necessary to sustain life. It is the chemical changes in living cells by which energy is provided for vital processes and activities, and new materials are assimilated to repair waste material. Like a good doctrinal sermon, food on the table can be prepared magnificently. But the food on the table must be eaten and metabolized to sustain life and create energy.

SPIRITUAL METABOLISM, PART 2

All Scripture is God Breathed

2 Timothy 3:16-17

09/05/04

Point 2: The first step begins with the believer's free will.

1. The believer must make a decision to not forsake assembling together, as Heb 10:25 teaches, "*Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*" The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus in Eph 3:18, "*That you may be able to comprehend in the presence of all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth.*" Gathering together is very important in the Church-age because it unites God's people and enables them to serve the Body of Christ.
2. Gathering together must be done under the filling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit must control your life because He is the real teacher of doctrine and the one who metabolizes it for you.
3. Once the human spirit receives the teaching, the believer automatically understands it as knowledge (*gnosis*). Once we receive *gnosis*, our volition must make a decision. Rejection of doctrine is rejection of the food we need for spiritual energy and to be spiritually strengthened. The believer who fails to metabolize doctrine will be a victim of Satan's cosmic systems. Metabolized doctrine will change your life now and give you advantages you never dreamed of in eternity.
4. It is only when *gnosis* is transformed into *epignosis* that the believer can receive the momentum to keep going, 2Co 4:7.

The power comes from the Bible doctrine and God the Holy Spirit Eph 1:15-23, Heb 4:12, Acts 1:8. When you make positive faith decisions toward doctrine, the Holy Spirit transfers *gnosis* into *epignosis*. If you reject the doctrine, you will only have *gnosis*. Metabolism is the process between *gnosis* and *epignosis*. A pastor can only take you as far as your volition. He cannot give you wisdom; he can only give you knowledge, Jer 3:15. You must take the personal responsibility for your own personal life. When *gnosis* doctrine is at the entrance of your soul, the mind, it is up to you whether you will let it in or not. God the Holy Spirit has made it clear to you; the question is, are you going to resist it? Food on the table is not energy for the body until it is assimilated and taken in.

Metabolism converts food into energy just as spiritual metabolism converts spiritual food into spiritual energy. Doctrine is spiritual food, and it is at the point of metabolism that doctrine becomes spiritual energy. Christian production is a result of spirituality, not the means, and doctrine is the power and energy that the Christian uses to produce divine good. Evil and legalism are the human power that negative believers use to produce human good. Once doctrine is metabolized it becomes momentum in the Christian life.

Point 3: God's grace provisions for the metabolization of Bible doctrine. Grace guarantees that God has provided everything necessary for the believer to assimilate Bible doctrine. In logistical grace, God provides:

1. Life, Job 33:4. You are alive right now courtesy of the grace of God.
2. A local assembly, Heb 10:25. This means a classroom, even if you are not under face-to-face teaching.
3. Your right pastor-teacher, Eph 4:11-12. Not the one that is closest to you or gives you the most attention, but one who feeds you the Word of God.
4. Volition, Gal 6:7. Everything necessary for you to make your own daily decisions for doctrine.
5. Time, Eph 5:16. If you do not have enough time during the day to study Bible doctrine, you are deceived by Satan and the kingdom of darkness.

6. A plan, Eph 2:10.
7. Human spirit, Tit 3:5. The grace provision of the human spirit makes possible the understanding of doctrine and gives us the capacity for an unlimited spiritual I.Q.
8. The Holy Spirit as your Mentor, Joh 14:26.

Point 4: The mentorship of the Holy Spirit related to spiritual metabolism. In Joh 14:26 we read, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” In Joh 14:16-17, the Lord gave His disciples a prophecy: “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper [parakleton], that He may be with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world is not able to receive, because they neither see Him nor do they know Him, but you know Him because He lives with you, and will be in you.” This Greek word parakleton means a helper or counselor, someone who can instill wisdom into your soul—a perfect illustration of the ministry of God the Holy Spirit during the metabolization of Bible doctrine.

The phrase “because He lives with you” describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the disciples during the dispensation of the hypostatic union. This was the most intimate ministry of God the Holy Spirit to human beings prior to the Church-age. Then we have the phrase “and He will be in you,” which describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit to Church-age believers. Every member of the Trinity indwells every believer during the Church-age.

The mentorship of the Holy Spirit is part of the three *spiritual skills*. The filling of the Holy Spirit is the first power option and the first spiritual skill in the spiritual life. Without the filling of the Spirit you do not have the power to live the Christian way of life. It is the filling of the Spirit that converts human I.Q. into spiritual I.Q., so that we have *equality* to learn spiritual phenomena. The spiritual I.Q., provided by our Mentor, is the equal opportunity under divine control of the spiritual birth and the mentorship of God the Holy Spirit. This God-given equality is based on at least forty benefits we receive at salvation, including the two power options, the three spiritual skills, and our portfolio of invisible assets.

The second power option and the second spiritual skill is the metabolized doctrine circulating in your stream of consciousness through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. The more you learn doctrine, the more doctrine will be circulating in your stream of consciousness, which has seven compartments, (1) the frame of reference, (2) the memory center, (3) vocabulary storage, (4) categorical storage, (5) the conscience, (6) the momentum department, and (7) the wisdom department.

The third spiritual skill is the problem-solving devices deployed on the FLOT line of the soul (military acronym for the forward line of troops). From the combination of the first two power options comes the execution of the predesigned plan of God, beginning with the deployment of problem-solving devices on the FLOT line of the soul. You can now meet any situation in life and solve your problems in the privacy of your own soul.

Point 5: The indwelling and filling of the Spirit related to mentorship. The deity of the Holy Spirit is taught throughout scripture, as in Mat 28:19, Joh 4:24, and 2Co 13:14.

The deity of God the Holy Spirit is God is very clear in *Act 5:1*, “*But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife’s full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.’*”

The titles of the Holy Spirit also prove that He is God—(1) Spirit of God, Gen 1:2, Mat 3:16, (2) Spirit of the Lord, Luk 4:18, (3) Spirit of Jehovah, Jud 3:10, (4) Spirit of the Lord God, Isa 61:1, (5)

Spirit of the living God, 2Co 3:3, (6) “My Spirit,” Gen 6:3, (7) Spirit of our God, 1Co 6:11, (8) the Lord, the Spirit, 2Co 3:18, (9) eternal Spirit, Heb 9:14, (10) Spirit of glory, 1Pe 4:14, and (11) Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Rom 8:2. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit must be distinguished from the filling of the Holy Spirit, which is the function of the Holy Spirit empowering your spiritual life. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer’s body for a number of reasons:

1. To guarantee great blessings from the function of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To create a temple for the indwelling of Christ as a guarantee of blessing. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s body is found in Rom 8:10; 1Co 3:16, 6:19-20; 2Co 6:16.
3. To provide a permanent base for the Holy Spirit’s availability as your Mentor and the agent for metabolizing doctrine.

The indwelling of the Spirit is also permanent and is not effected by experiential status. The indwelling of the Spirit is never mandated because it is *unchangeable and permanent*, whether the believer is carnal or spiritual, winner or loser. At the moment of salvation, your soul is filled with the Holy Spirit (the Holy Spirit controlling the soul), but when personal sin takes place, the filling of the Spirit is replaced by sin nature control of your soul. Therefore, the filling of the Spirit is mandated in Eph 5:18. The command of Gal 5:16 to “*keep walking by means of the Spirit*” is the *function* of the spiritual life, which comes from metabolizing Bible doctrine. In the filling of the Spirit, He *controls* the soul. As our mentor, the filling of the Holy Spirit provides the power for the spiritual life and the basis for teaching us the Word of God.

In 1Co 2:9-11, we read, “*But just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But to us [for our benefit] God has revealed them through the agency of the Spirit; for the Spirit investigates all things, even the deep things [such as our portfolio of invisible assets, the mystery doctrine of the Church-age, the angelic conflict, etc.] from God. For who among mankind understands the thoughts of mankind except the spirit [the soul—pneuma] that is in him? Even so the message from God no one has known except the Holy Spirit from God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.*”

Apart from the mentorship of God the Holy Spirit, the believer is helpless to understand and execute the predesigned plan of God. It is the soul of man that thinks and understands the thoughts within him; the real you is your soul. It was only after God the Holy Spirit became their Mentor that the Lord’s disciples could truly understand the Word of God. This is why our Lord said in Joh 16:12, “*I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*” No one can understand the Word of God apart from the mentorship of God the Holy Spirit, 1Co 2:13-14. The unbeliever cannot understand the doctrines of the Spirit of God, because he does not have a human spirit. God the Holy Spirit must make the Gospel understandable as spiritual phenomena, and as our Mentor He teaches us Bible doctrine.

God the Holy Spirit, as our Mentor, is also the divine author of the infallible Word of God. In Joh 16:13-14, “*But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but He will speak only what He hears; He shall glorify Me; because He shall receive from Me [My message], and He will report it back to you.*” The Holy Spirit will communicate the unfinished message of our Lord Jesus Christ, found in the epistles of the New Testament, because at this time, the disciples could not yet understand it! After the resurrection, ascension, and session, God the Holy Spirit was sent as a personal Mentor to all believers.

You cannot glorify God unless the Holy Spirit is your Mentor. Also, you cannot fulfill the spiritual mechanics of God’s plan unless the Holy Spirit is your Mentor and the agent for metabolizing Bible doctrine. A perfect God can only create a perfect plan, and a perfect plan requires perfect power for its execution, since we are imperfect persons.

Point 6: Spiritual metabolism is also related to the mechanics of divine inspiration. We are told in 2Ti 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed [theopneustos] and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness [virtue], that the man of God may be proficient [well-advanced, skilled, mature, an expert], equipped for every good production.” God the Holy Spirit provided certain information to the human authors of Scripture, and this information was “exhaled” into the canon of scripture. It is this information metabolized that gives the believer the spiritual energy and power to live the spiritual life. In the early Church-age (A.D. 33 to 96), the human authors inhaled the Holy Spirit’s message and exhaled that message into the New Testament scriptures.

Theopneustos means that God the Holy Spirit so supernaturally directed the human authors of the New Testament to put in writing our Lord’s complete and accurate message to the Church, that (1) this message was recorded with perfect accuracy in the original languages of the New Testament, and that (2) this was accomplished without waiving their intelligence, their individuality, their personal feelings, their literary style, or any other human factor of expression.

The exhale is the human writers of the New Testament writing down in the Greek the completed message of the Lord Jesus Christ and the plan of God the Father for all believers. This is the doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration. Verbal plenary inspiration applies only to the original languages of Scripture—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The human writers wrote down in their own language the divine message to mankind under the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why the Word of God is called in Heb 3:7, “The voice of the Spirit.” Man is the instrument but not the author of the Word of God, 2Pe 1:20-21, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

The inhale is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who communicates to the human author God’s complete and coherent message to all generations of history. While the writers of Scripture had other messages for their generations, only what God desired and what was pertinent to all generations was actually recorded and preserved. The exhale is what the human writer wrote down in his own language and within the framework of his own personality. God used each writer’s vocabulary, intelligence, personality, feeling, and individuality in communicating the divine message to man. This is a part of the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to the positive believer. It is available to all believers, but only those believers who give Bible doctrine top priority actually profit from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Point 7: Spiritual metabolism from the Holy Spirit is the divine power for the spiritual life. Since the divine plan for the Church-age is a perfect plan from a perfect God, it can only be fulfilled through the perfect power of God. As our Mentor and teacher of doctrine, God the Holy Spirit provides the power for the execution of the spiritual life. He does so, not through emotion or feeling, but through *thought* and through metabolizing Bible doctrine in the believer’s soul. As a part of your portfolio of invisible assets, you were given your very own spiritual life, and you alone are the only one who can live that life.

Because God is perfect, the plan He has for you is perfect; however, none of us are perfect, and therefore we need the mentorship of God the Holy Spirit. Perfect God provides everything we need to execute His perfect plan. The prophecy of the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the power of the spiritual life is taught in Acts 1:7-8, “*He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know the times or the dispensations which the Father has established by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.’*” God the Holy Spirit as the Mentor would teach all believers about the dispensation of the Church.

Eph 5:18 says, “*Stop being intoxicated with wine by which is dissipation [a lifestyle of pre-occupation with self, in an attempt to solve the problems of life], but keep on being filled with the Holy*

Spirit. "Dissipation" refers to a disorderly lifestyle, an excessive lifestyle of dependence on the wrong solutions to the problems of life. The phrase "be filled" is the present, passive, imperative form of the Greek verb *pleroo*, which has four meanings:

1. To fill up a deficiency. The filling of the Holy Spirit fills up our deficiency of power to execute the spiritual life.
2. To fully possess. The believer must be fully possessed by the Holy Spirit and Bible doctrine before he can be fully possessed by the blessings of maturity.
3. To fully influence. The believer must be fully influenced by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit so that he can have capacity for blessing.
4. To fill with a certain quality. The filling of the Holy Spirit along with doctrine is the highest quality with which the believer can be filled.

Through the metabolization of Bible doctrine, the Holy Spirit fills up the deficiency in your life, fully possesses you, fully influences you, if you allow Him to, and fills you with a certain quality of life. Spirituality is the filling of the Spirit, and spiritual maturity is the result of spiritual growth from learning doctrine under the filling of the Spirit.

SPIRITUAL METABOLISM, PART 3

Be on your guard

2 Peter 3:10-18

09/12/04

Point 8: The Biblical Warnings Concerning the Rejection of Spiritual Metabolism. Virtually every doctrine includes a set of warnings. 1Th 5:19 commands us, *“Do not quench the Spirit.”* You quench the Holy Spirit when you allow the sin nature to control the soul; this is caused by stress in the soul producing sin, by false doctrine in the soul, or by using defensive mechanisms instead of the problem-solving devices. In this state, you have no divine power at your disposal, and you need the recovery of the power of the Holy Spirit, Eph 4:30, *“Furthermore, stop grieving the Holy Spirit, the God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Spirituality (the filling of the Holy Spirit) is the link from salvation to spiritual maturity. The journey from salvation to maturity requires the daily metabolization of Bible doctrine under the filling of the Holy Spirit. We can lose the filling of the Spirit through sin (grieving the Spirit), but we can never lose the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Joh 14:16.

Inasmuch as God the Holy Spirit has certain specific relationships with members of the human race, there are certain ways in which man sins specifically against the Holy Spirit. Since the human race is divided into two categories based upon attitude toward Jesus Christ, the sins against the Holy Spirit are divided the same way. The sins committed by the unbeliever against the Holy Spirit are committed in the status of spiritual death.

- Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, Mat 12:14-32. Believers cannot commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. In fact, this sin could only be committed during the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union. This sin was the rejection of the signs, miracles, and person of the Messiah.
- Resistance of the Holy Spirit, Acts 7:51, *“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in your right lobes and ears [they heard and rejected common grace], you are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing what your ancestors did.”* Resistance of the Holy Spirit is rejection of Jesus Christ by the unbeliever during the course of human history. To the unbeliever, the Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit in order to make the Gospel real, 1Co 2:14. Therefore, the unbeliever resists by rejecting Gospel information. Resistance of the Holy Spirit includes three stages of negative volition.
 - Negative volition at the point of Gospel hearing.
 - Negative volition at the point of the divine call.
 - Negative volition at the point of salvation opportunity through faith.

Then we have the three sins of the believer against the Holy Spirit.

- Lying to the Holy Spirit, Acts 5:3.
- Grieving the Holy Spirit, Eph 4:30.
- Quenching the Holy Spirit, 1Th 5:19.

Lying against the Holy Spirit is inordinate ambition and inordinate competition in the spiritual realm, and a perfect example is found in Act 5. A man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira, controlled by their approbation lust, sold a piece of property and gave a portion of the money to the Apostle Peter for the church. However, they claimed that the money they gave was the entire price for which they sold the property! The problem was not that they kept some of the money, but after seeing Barnabas selling his property and giving the entire sum to the church, they wanted to give the impression that they were doing the same. The Supreme Court of Heaven dealt with both of them on an individual basis, and they both dropped dead. At this point, they were the worst enemies of the Church, not because they didn't give enough, but because they were hypocrites.

Grieving the Holy Spirit is failure to rebound and self-fragmentation from sins in soul and trends toward legalism or antinomianism, and includes the early stages of Christian degeneracy. However, no matter how low a believer sinks into sin, he always has the choice to rebound and learn doctrine.

Quenching the Holy Spirit occurs in different of battles in the soul:

- Stress in the soul (little or no problem-solving devices).
- The old sin nature controlling the soul (human good and dead works).
- False doctrine in the soul.

Quenching the Spirit is the entrance into the final stages of Christian degeneracy, i.e., blackout of the soul, scar tissue of the soul, and the total collapse of the believer. It is perpetual living inside *Cosmic 2* (antagonism toward God and His Word). This believer is under the influence of evil and produces only human good, as he is locked into moral or immoral degeneracy.

Point 9: Spiritual Metabolism Related to the Communion Service. In Joh 6:35 our Lord said, *"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."* The phrase "I am" (*ego eimi*) is the first of the seven *I am* titles of Christ found in the Gospel of John. These titles refer back to God appearing to Moses in the burning bush and sending him to Egypt (Exo 3). The Lord's use of these titles at once identifies Him with Jehovah of the Old Testament, and unequivocally demonstrates His absolute deity. *"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died"* (Joh 6:49). The manna did not prevent their physical death; however, the *new manna* will prevent spiritual death (for the unbeliever in salvation), and temporal death (for the believer after salvation). Spiritual death is the penalty of sin, and was so given as the warning to our original parents in the garden, Gen 2:17, *"Dying you will die."* Spiritual death is separation from God forever. Living in the cosmic system is temporal or cosmic death (no spiritual life in time). The manna from heaven, whether faith in Christ for the unbeliever or spiritual metabolism for the believer, delivers us from death, Joh 6:49-50, *"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread [a reference to His person] which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die."* When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are told in 1Co 11:26, *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."*

Our Lord goes on in Joh 6:51, *"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."* The Lord Jesus Christ alone can satisfy the soul and fill the void in every human heart. This satisfaction begins at salvation but finds its fulfillment in spiritual metabolism, eating the Word of God.

If we are to derive physical nourishment and energy from food, we must eat. This analogy is even of greater importance in the spiritual realm; we must know the truth. Speculating or talking about it will do us no good. We must perceive it, 2Pe 3:18, have it metabolized by God the Holy Spirit, Rom 12:2, and apply to our lives, Jam 1:22. Eating means responding to a necessary need; we have the need for physical food to sustain us physically and the need for spiritual food to sustain us spiritually. Eating is always a personal act; it is something no one else can do for us.

We can respect the wonderful person of our Lord, admire His perfect life, be touched by His unselfishness and tenderness and compassion, and moved to tears at the sight of Him dying on the cross. However, it is not until we abide in Him through His Word, and live with Him as He lived, that we experience His life—His truth that sets us free.

This principle of the "bread of life" correlates with the great central theme of the Gospel in Joh 1:14, *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."* Our Lord is the living bread, which has come down from heaven. The world passes away and vanishes, but the food which comes down from above will endure forever. For the unbeliever the bread of life, or the manna from heaven, is the person of the

Lord Jesus Christ, Act 16:31, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved." For believers it is Bible doctrine, the mind of Christ, 1Co 2:16.

God has promised to give His people shepherds to feed them, Jer 3:15, Psa 119:103, Heb 5:14, Joh 21:15-17. In Joh 21:15-17 we read, "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My lambs.' [The Greek noun *arnion* refers to lambs, therefore analogous to the new believers.] He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.'" [The Greek verb *poimaino* means to rule or "clobber," which is necessary for believers who have a little doctrine and think they have a lot.] He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' [The verb *bosko* is a command to prudently feed the humble sheep, the mature believers.]"

The point is that eating His flesh has to do with believing upon Him for the unbeliever and metabolizing His Word for the believer. He is the Passover Lamb that the Jews celebrated. As Joh 1:29 says, "*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*"

Titles of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John

1. "*I am the light of the world*" (8:12).
2. "*I am the door*" (10:9).
3. "*I am the good shepherd*" (10:11).
4. "*I am the resurrection and the life*" (11:25).
5. "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*" (14:6).
6. "*I am the true vine*" (15:1)

Point 10: The Conclusion. When a believer lacks spiritual metabolism, he lacks spiritual energy and therefore has no momentum in the Christian life. The average believer turns to a substitute system of human power manifested by various systems of pseudo-spirituality.

- Personality imitation. This is a misunderstanding of passages such as 1Co 4:16, "*I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me*"; or 1Co 11:1, "*Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.*" In both verses, the Greek noun *mimetes* means a follower of *the doctrine being taught*, not the personality of the teacher!
- Superficial mannerisms. In 2Ti 3:5 Paul warns us about those who are "*holding to a superficial form of the spiritual life [eusebeia], although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.*" In religion, mannerisms of dress, especially wearing dull colors, is considered spiritual, and bright, attractive clothing is thought to be worldly. The scriptures do not forbid a particular style of clothing; they simply instruct us that true beauty resides in the soul, not in our appearance, as in 1Pe 3:3. There are all kinds of personalities in the Christian life and each is designed by God for its own purpose. The spiritual life does not demand that we all act a certain way. God has provided for every believer his very own spiritual life with a *uniform set of principles and divine mandates*, and the means of glorifying Him. The spiritual life is *not* a uniform personality. There are changes that will occur in you as a result of your growth, but there is no mold into which you can be forced. No one has the right to bully you into changing your personality.

- Clichés and “holy” language.
- Program Christianity.
- Emotionalism.
- The works of the flesh.
- Change of behavior pattern.
- Works.
- Yielding” (a misunderstanding of the English translation of Rom 6:13,16,19 in the *King James Bible*). This is trying to be spiritual through rededicating oneself or making vows.
- Self-crucifixion—denying yourself anything enjoyable.
- Prohibition—no drinking, no smoking, etc.
- Relativity—comparing oneself with others, as in 2Co 10:12.
- Rituals.

The Bible says be care of those who have a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, and evil suspicions, 1Ti 6:4.

To advance to spiritual maturity, we need divine energy, which requires diligence, 2Pe 3:14, *“Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”* The verb translated “be diligent” is the Greek word *spoudazo*, which means to labor, to make a constant effort, and to study. 2Pe 3:15-16 continues, *“And regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you [this indicates the tremendous spiritual growth of Peter, who had been rebuked by Paul in Jerusalem], as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”* Ignorant believers distort doctrinal teaching; they create major issues out of something inconsequential, Mat 23:24, *“You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”*

Peter has established his premise in 2Pe 3:11-14, *“Since all these things [the earth and its works] are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct, looking for [looking forward] and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise [life in the eternal state] we are looking forward with confidence for new heavens and a new earth, in which perfect righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since we are looking forward with confidence for these things, be diligent [self-motivated] to be found by Him [at the Judgment Seat of Christ] in peace [a state of tranquility and prosperity], spotless [the execution of the spiritual life] and blameless [no embarrassment for lost opportunity].”* This passage emphasizes the futility and vanity of living for the things in this life, which will all be destroyed in God’s timing, and that is why the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said in Luk 9:25, *“For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses [forfeits] himself?”*

Peter then continues in 2Pe 3:17, *“You therefore, beloved [all believers are loved by God, winners and losers alike], knowing this beforehand be on your guard...”* The word “beloved” is *agapetos*, which indicates the tremendous privileges that belong to us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The verb *proginosko* means to know in advance. This refers to doctrines which you have previously learned and metabolized. You will never be on your guard and have a doctrinal warning system in your soul until you metabolize the necessary doctrine. What endures the destruction of the universe establishes the true eternal values of life and the highest priorities you should have as a member of the Royal Family. Metabolized doctrine will give you permanent values, with all other values subservient to or complaint with them. This is a command to be alert and have proper discernment concerning cosmic Christianity. This means to be alert with loved ones, friends, and others who influence you, people whom you admire. Before we can have fulfilling relationships with people, we must have a right relationship with God.

We must ignore public opinion and go against the herd, Mat 7:13. Following God's plan is going to put you in the minority. Rev 12:9 tells us all we need to know about the majority: *"And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."*

Metabolized doctrine produces objectivity in our friendships and relationships with others, 2Pe 3:17, *"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness."* The Greek verb *sunapago* means to be seduced, to be carried away in a friendly, congenial way, i.e., by someone you trust or admire. In Eph 4:14, they lie in wait to deceive, and they do not even know they are under deception. The word "error" is *plané*, which means deceit. It is very easy for us to be deceived by those whom we love. The word for "fall," *ekipto*, means to drift off course, therefore failing in your responsibility as a believer-priest. "Steadfastness" is *sterignos*, meaning a secure position or a firm hold—your support system. When you drift off course from your support system, the inevitable result is failure to overcome the enemy and execute God's plan.

2Pe 3:18 gives us the means of protecting ourselves from the influence of satanic evil, and the deadly trap of subjectivity: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." Verse 17 deals with the warning against cosmic Christianity, and verse 18 deals with the defense against cosmic Christianity—grow, increase, and progress in grace and knowledge. Your soul must be drawn toward God with stronger force than it is drawn toward people you love. And this is only possible through metabolized doctrine.

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA, PART 2

Albany Conference 2004

Revelation 2:18-29

09/19/04

The dissertation to the church at Thyatira is one of the longest to the seven churches in *Revelation*, yet one of the most rewarding. We begin with our corrected translation of Rev 2:18, *“And to the messenger in Thyatira [the future pastor-teachers of this church, or the future pastor-teachers of the Thyatira-type believers in the Church-age] write [communicate]: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this...”*

Thyatira was the world’s center for the worship of the sun god Apollo and was also famous for its labor unions. It was the most completely unionized city in the Roman world. All craftsmen in Thyatira belonged to a union, and they had tremendous influence. These unions sponsored the phallic cult, which promoted of all forms of sexual activity, as in 2Co 12:21; Eph 3:5, 4:19, 5:5; Rev 2:14,20-23. Phallic reversionism comes from demonism and was forbidden by God in Exo 20:3,23, 23:24; Deu 4:28, 5:7, 6:14, 7:16, 8:19. No nation ever survives the spread of the phallic cult and the influence of excessive sexual perversion. In Thyatira, many believers were coming under the influence of the cults and idol worship.

“The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze...” This statement stands in contrast to the sun god Apollo, the so-called “god of protection,” which was represented with flaming rays and feet of burnished brass, and claimed to be the son of Zeus, the father of all gods. Our Lord’s claim was much higher—He is the Son of God! The Lord is setting Himself in direct opposition to Jezebel, and His eyes are like a flame of fire, which means His inspection of every believer is intense and piercing. He scrutinizes His people, uncovering all the hidden things of darkness, penetrating the secret rooms in their heart, Eph 4:27, Psa 19:12. However, always remember there should be no guilt or condemnation when He reveals these things to us (Heb 4:12-16).

There is a secret room in the hearts of many believers where the soul stores up secrets, fears, and insecurities, and in many cases refuses to even admit that there is a problem. These things give an individual a very low self-image and can lead to the arrogance complex of sins. They weigh down the heart with guilt, and destroy a believer’s confidence in his relationship with God. This room often contains the idol of fear, doubt, or lust.

Defense mechanisms are designed to hide or to relieve the conflicts and stresses in the soul that cause anxiety, hysteria, fear, worry, or other categories of the emotional complex of sins, the worst being guilt. Defense mechanisms are designed to bury any reaction you might have, any lack of esteem, or any explanation for impulsive behavior or failure on your part.

1. Denial: The person fails to acknowledge some aspect of external reality that is obvious and apparent to others. Denial is a false perception of reality (Pro 30:12).
2. Dissociation or withdrawal: The person does not want to deal with a situation.
3. Isolation: The person is unable to experience what is really happening around them or in their life. They feel isolated from their problems because they cannot deal with their problems, so they must dump part of it into the “garbage can” of the subconscious to isolate it from the rest of their soul.
4. Projection: The person assigns or projects his own flaws, sins, and failures to others in order to rid himself of his own failures and elevate himself.
5. Rationalization: This is a defense mechanism that devises reassuring or self-serving but erroneous explanations for one’s behavior. This is rationalizing an action which the believer knows is not Biblical, but he feels he has the right.

6. Repression: The person is unable to remember or to be aware of disturbing lusts, wishes, feelings, thoughts, or experiences related to sin. It is the unconscious exclusion of painful impulses, desires, or fears from the conscious mind.
7. Suppression: The person *intentionally* avoids thinking about disturbing thoughts, problems, experiences, or feelings.
8. Controlling: The person attempts to excessively manage or regulate events, objects, or people in their environment.
9. Devaluation: The person attributes exaggerated negative qualities to self and others. This type of person is always putting self or others down.
10. Direct attack: Anger is used as a solution to the problems and frustrations of life. The individual makes wrong decisions, and when he is caught in the act, instead of admitting he is wrong, he attacks others to switch the blame.
11. Subjectivity: This involves self-pity, as the individual assumes no one loves him, and he feels left out and depressed (e.g., Elijah in 1Ki 19:3-4). This type of believer has no capacity for life, love, and happiness, and so sublimates and becomes a slave to specific details of life.

All these defense mechanisms are the function of your own free will choosing to use them. The spiritual life that God has provided has all the solutions to every problem you will ever face. When you are in the plan of God, you will have difficulties to deal with. Choosing to use any defense mechanism means going in the opposite direction of your spiritual life. Many believers are embarrassed about this secret room in their soul; however, the Lord knows that it exists, and He has a plan to free the believer from this slavery. Unless the believer is free from these rooms of imaginary fears and worries or secret faults and sins, he will never enjoy true freedom. This room will become a dungeon and a prison in his life.

“And His feet are like burnished bronze...” “Burnished bronze” is a reference to historical judgment to the nations of history, under the principle that Jesus Christ controls history. The eyes like a flaming fire and the feet of bronze are two ways of describing the judgments that the Lord Jesus Christ brings upon believers who fail to execute their own personal drama and personal sense of destiny.

In spite of the desperate conditions in the church at Thyatira, we are impressed that the Lord Jesus Christ gives them the warmest commendation for love and service when He says in Rev 2:19, *“I know your deeds [your accomplishments, Christian production], namely the virtue-love and the faith [the three stages of the faith-rest drill], and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.”* Even though these believers were growing spiritually, the Lord Jesus Christ still gives them a warning about idol worship and inordinate attachment to the wrong influences.

The Lord goes on in Rev 2:20, *“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”* Jezebel was a smart, beautiful, dangerous woman, and she represents all that is attractive and tempting and that lures the believer away from the predesigned plan of God.

1. Jezebel is not her literal name; it is a title that describes what this woman was like—a very intelligent, beautiful woman living at the head of a phallic cult in Thyatira.
2. She had succeeded in luring believers away from doctrine into the phallic cult just as the historical Jezebel who corrupted Israel. The worst invasions Israel ever faced was not the Assyrian army of 180,000 troops; it was one woman called Jezebel.
3. The Word of God strongly opposes female leadership in spiritual matters, 1Ti 2:11-15.
4. The pattern for this Biblical prohibition of female leadership goes back to the Garden of Eden and the historical trend related to the weak controlling the strong. The Bible calls the woman

the “weaker vessel,” not because she lacks courage or character, but simply because she is dependent on the man.

5. The woman sinned first and became weak, which is why the Bible calls the woman the weaker vessel. In the Garden of Eden we have the first case of the weak and the strong—the woman, who had sinned first, was the weak, and the man who had not yet sinned was the strong.
6. From the very beginning of man’s failure on planet earth he was the victim of the weak controlling the strong.
7. Adam took the forbidden fruit from the hand of the woman, not from the tree.

Genesis chapter three is the “seed plot” of the entire Bible. Every doctrine in the Bible has its beginning in here, as well as many allegorical teachings.

1. The Garden of Eden was to Adam (when he looked at the first sinner and was tempted) as the predesigned plan of God is to the believer when faced with temptation and manipulation by the weak. The fallen woman in the garden is the pattern of the weak controlling the strong, and Jezebel follows this pattern perfectly (2Co 11:3).
2. Inside the predesigned plan of God, “the battle is the Lord’s.” You win when you make the right choice. Inside the cosmic system, the battle is yours and you lose, because you have made the wrong choice.
3. There are no winners in the cosmic system; there are just different kinds of losers, including those who are strong but are controlled by the weak.
4. Fortunately for the church at Thyatira, many believers had rejected the lure of the weak controlling the strong.
5. Starting with Adam’s wrong decision, we have the great conflict; man must choose between arrogance and humility as an extension of the angelic conflict.
6. If you think you are strong you really become weak, and you will be entangled in a system stronger than you are—the cosmic system of Satan, by which he administers his rulership of this world (1Co 3:18).
7. Once you choose a power system in which to reside as a believer, your decision merges into a power greater than you are.

The author of the book of *Kings* is clear that Jezebel was an implacable dictator—a clever intriguer and a shameless tramp. She was the priestess of the phallic cult called Ashteroth (Aphrodite). Her husband Ahab was a great soldier; he would have been a great king, except for the fact that he was a victim of a very evil, weak person controlling the strong. In her marriage to King Ahab, Jezebel changed her nationality, but she never changed her religion, the phallic cult. By controlling Ahab, she brought great apostasy to Israel, the greatest invasion of the cosmic system into Israel in all of its history. She sponsored 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of Astarti, who were feminine or homosexual men. With her foot in the door, she also arranged the assassination of the Lord’s prophets, as in 1Ki 18:13, 2Ki 9:7. Jezebel has stamped her name on history as the representative of all that is conniving, crafty, malicious, vengeful, and cruel. She is the first great instigator of persecution against the saints of God. She outlived Ahab by about 14 years, and she was a magnificently beautiful woman, with brains.

“*She teaches and leads My bond-servants astray...*” The Greek word *planao* means to deceive, seduce, or lead astray. Deception is vicious and evil, and must be identified and dealt with. Satan has one goal in the life of every believer—to lead them astray. Deception is demonization of the soul and personality of the believer or unbeliever living in the cosmic system. All believers and unbelievers in the cosmic system are under some form of satanic deception, Col 2:1-4. This is what Jezebel specialized in as a pawn of Satan and the kingdom of darkness.

God’s Word continually warns us against deception, as in Eph 4:14,27; 2Pe 3:17; Jam 4:6-8; Pro 3:34; 1Co 15:33; Mat 22:29, 24:24; Psa 95:10; Heb 3:10; Gal 6:7; 1Jo 1:8; Rev 13:14. In every passage

where God makes war against the arrogant, there is a reference to deception. In Rom 16:17-18, Paul gives us a stern warning and command concerning those who have been deceived and are deceiving others: *“Now I urge you, brethren, be alert for those who cause dissensions and hindrances to doctrine [they cause apostasies] contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and turn away from them. For such individuals are slaves, not of our Lord Jesus Christ but of their own emotions and appetites, and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting [the stupid].”* For the believer, deception can only be avoided through life in the predesigned plan of God. Resistance is a matter of learning doctrine. The four R’s protect us from deception—(1) Reception, (2) Retention, (3) Recall, and (4) Resistance.

This dispensation is the age of the *power systems*—the predesigned plan of God versus the cosmic system—and the options for the believer are very simple; either choose God’s way and God’s power in the predesigned plan of God, or choose Satan’s way and Satan’s power in the cosmic system. When we fall out of the predesigned plan of God, we are led away by the weak controlling the strong.

Normal weakness must be distinguished from evil weakness. Normal weakness includes the problems in our life that we cannot solve and our inability to solve those problems. Evil weakness is association with the cosmic system. Evil weakness seeks to solve the problems of life by ignoring or rejecting the problems, or using cosmic solutions, such as those in the religion in Thyatira, which was composed of sex and ecstasies. We are the products of our own decisions, not our environment; volition creates environment.

All apostasy is preceded by some form of inculcation. The believer does not have to listen to false teaching or inculcation, but he will if he has neglected Bible doctrine, and wandered away from the power system, the predesigned plan of God. In the human history phase of the angelic conflict, man is free to fail and free to succeed, and therefore, the source of either failure or success is the same. Freedom carries the responsibility of making decisions. We must be so inculcated with truth and doctrine, that he will take the responsibility for our own decisions.

“So that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols...” The Greek verb *porneuo* means fornication and sexual sins. The question is, do you control your life or does your life control you? In the case of fornication, it is the body controlling you. Eating food sacrificed to idols has to do with the function of the phallic cult; the food sacrificed to idols was sometimes human flesh, which entails cannibalism. However, no matter what kind of meat it was, the fellowship and partying with those in the cosmic system brings up a very important principle—believers must be very aware of who they have a social life with. The people with whom you socialize will often have the greatest influence in your life. In effect, this passage says, if you want to stay out of the cosmic system, guard your social life, especially your sexual life.

There is fornication as a social sin, and there is fornication related to religion, specifically the phallic cult. One is a sin, one is a system of evil, and both are terribly destructive. God invented sex for right-man/right-woman (one man and one woman). Every man must guard his soul and his body for his right woman. Both soul and body must be protected when waiting, or dating the right woman or right man. Sexual affairs will knock you down and keep you down. Every time someone has sex with the wrong person, they give their glory away. Your glory, all of it, and your sex, all of it, belongs to only one other person. When someone is trying to lead you astray sexually, walk away and save your glory. We must flee from such dangerous, destructive attacks and temptations. Optimum satisfaction in sex is related to virtue in the soul, not sexual athleticism. Remember, grace is the power to change, the power to be restored. You cannot change your past but you can change your future.

Rev 2:21-22 continues, *“And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. [Jezebel is apparently a believer, as she is commanded to repent of her fornication, rather than unbelief.] Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.”* God will not stand by while members of the

Royal Family sink into degeneracy. He takes stern measures to alert them to their critical situation and to encourage them to rebound and re-enter the predesigned plan of God.

In His perfect wisdom, God knows when to warn each believer. He knows the most effective way to confront us with the fact that we are totally dependent on His grace. All divine discipline is administered in grace. The Christian under discipline may doubt that God is treating him in grace, but he could not imagine how much more he would hurt if God were not acting in grace.

In conclusion, our Lord makes this great statement of encouragement and promise in Rev 2:24-29, *“But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

KNOWLEDGE, GNOSIS AND EPIGNOSIS

Philippians 4:9

09/26/04

Philippians 4:9 (corrected translation) These things [*doctrinal principles*] also you have learned [*manthano—learned from a teacher under strict academic discipline*] and received [*accepted through metabolization of doctrine*] and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

There is a tremendous difference between having *gnosis* (knowledge) and *epignosis* (wisdom). *Epignosis*, metabolized doctrine, is absolutely essential to our spiritual life and our relationship with God.

1. The will of God for mankind is twofold—(1) for the unbeliever, salvation, and (2) for the believer, metabolized doctrine. 1Ti 2:3-4 summarizes this will of God in one sentence: “*This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the epignosis knowledge of the truth.*” The Apostle Paul calls himself in Tit 1:1 “*Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the [epignosis] knowledge of the truth which is according to living the spiritual life.*” He also wrote in Eph 4:13, “*Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the epignosis knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.*”
2. The cosmic believer fails to metabolize doctrine, 2Ti 3:2-7. Therefore he ends up under divine discipline and will eventually die the sin unto death, 1Jo 5:16, Eph 6:2-3.
3. Only metabolized doctrine can be useful for problem solving, Eph 1:17, “*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the epignosis knowledge of Him.*” The “spirit of wisdom” refers to the application of metabolized doctrine under the enabling power of the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit gives you the ability to handle your problems through *epignosis* doctrine. Whether in adversity or prosperity, you must solve your problems on the base of inner happiness from *epignosis* doctrine.
4. All genuine fellowship with believers is based on metabolized doctrine and virtue, Phn 1:6.
5. Therefore, only metabolized doctrine can fulfill the mandate of *virtue first* in the predesigned plan of God, Phi 1:9, 2Pe 1:8.
6. Only metabolized doctrine can fulfill the plan of God, Col 1:9-11.
7. If you have only *gnosis* doctrine, there is no basis for blessing. Only metabolized doctrine can provide blessing under the predesigned plan of God, 2Pe 1:2-3, 3:17-18.
8. You can have a zeal to know God, but if you do not have metabolized doctrine it is useless, Rom 10:2.
9. True wealth and prosperity comes from *epignosis* doctrine, Col 2:2.
10. The new man can only be renewed and energized through metabolized doctrine, Col 3:10.

We all need to understand the difference between *gnosis* and *epignosis* because many believers seem to be very gentle and humble on the outside, but are monsters within. We need to remember what the Lord would say when dealing with someone who was getting in the way of others executing the spiritual life, Mat 16:23, “*But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’*”

Many believers have *gnosis* but no *epignosis*, and they do not realize that they are being led astray and deceived by the kingdom of darkness. While they have a lot of *gnosis*, they have very little *epignosis*, and they destroy friendships and relationships and subtly sow discord. The greatest destroyer of homes is the one who destroys his own, and blames it on everyone else. Over a period of many years, they become so full of *gnosis* without *epignosis* that they destroy everything around them that is destroyable. The Lord called them “ravenous wolves” in Mat 7:12-20, but also told us that we

will “know them by their fruits.” They are a walking *gnosis* without *epignosis*, divorced from reality, and they only use doctrine as leverage against others. They come to believe they are greater spiritually than others, but the only ones they are deceiving are themselves, as in Oba 1:3, Pro 16:18.

Once again, our main passage, Phi 4:9, reads, “These things also you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.” The phrase “and heard” is the Greek conjunction *kai* and the verb *akouo*, meaning to hear and to concentrate. It means to hear and accept the authority of the doctrine being taught, therefore translated, “having heard under discipline”—the true function of the local church. It is in the constative aorist tense, which contemplates the action of the verb in its entirety. It considers every time the believer assembles in the classroom of Bible doctrine and submits to academic discipline of his pastor. In the active voice, the believer must make his own volitional decision to submit to the authority of the pastor. The indicative mood declares the dogmatic fact that all spiritual growth demands academic discipline and respect for the authority of the communicator, in order for the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine to function properly.

Spiritual authority resides in the Word of God and in its communicator, the pastor-teacher. His authority is limited to his own sheep, though his sheep need not be under his face-to-face ministry, as with the early church, Col 2:1. God has provided an umbrella of divine authority over the mechanics of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. The Royal Family honor code demands authority orientation in the form of academic discipline when the pastor is teaching. This academic discipline is the authority that the believer imposes upon himself during the teaching of the Word of God, so that others may be free to learn without distraction. The Royal Family honor code recognizes common sense and good manners, thoughtfulness of others, and respect for the Word of God. Inevitably, the issue is the mystery doctrine of the Church-age perceived and metabolized in your soul. This issue demands communication of doctrine from the pastor-teacher and perception by believers. However, the pastor cannot communicate what he does not know, therefore, his life must be devoted to studying and teaching the Word of God. What he teaches should be the result of many agonizing hours of study under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, Col 1:24-29. As Royal Family, we are required to respect and listen to the teaching, at which point we choose whether to metabolize it or not.

This means the pastor’s personality is not the issue when it comes to authority orientation and the function of the Royal Family honor code. Never permit preoccupation with the pastor’s “feet of clay” or his personality to hinder your perception of Bible doctrine. The “feet of clay” syndrome means placing our trust in a self-created illusion. We end up entering into iconoclastic arrogance (putting someone on a pedestal) and therefore victimizing another human being, and this is a major reason for believers quitting on the plan of God. Paul did not try to impress his listeners with polished speeches and the latest philosophy or advanced vocabulary; he was a genius, but he deliberately kept it plain and simple, 1Co 2:1-5.

The demonstration of the Spirit and of power from a teacher of doctrine is the accuracy of the doctrine being taught. Very few believers truly understand the importance of the communication of doctrine, and they focus on the communicators, many of whom never even teach vital doctrines such as the Filling of the Holy Spirit, the Angelic Conflict, the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Personal Sense of Destiny, Dispensations, Election, Escrow Blessings, Eternal Security, Grace, the Problem-Solving Devices, the Predesigned Plan of God, the Mystery Doctrine of the Church-age, the Judgment Seat of Christ, Justification, Metabolized Doctrine, the Royal Family Honor Code, Spiritual Gifts, the Spiritual Life, etc.

Unrealistic expectation merely interposes frustrations in our life, when those expectations are not met by the other person. This only serves to distract us from Bible doctrine and destroy the true focus of the Christian life, which is occupation with Christ, not people! As long as people react to

others who do not treat them the way they expect, virtue is impossible. This inevitably leads to eyes on self, eyes on people, and eyes on things, which can only lead to selfishness, jealousy, and covetousness.

Iconoclastic arrogance, or “role model” arrogance, can be a terrible hindrance to hearing the Word of God properly. Society and people in general assign certain customary functions to certain people and activities in life, such as politicians, ministers, husbands, wives, teachers, public servants, military personnel, and the successful and famous. These people are expected to function in a certain way; if they do not, others protest loudly, resulting in double standards. When anyone departs from his assigned “role,” he is condemned, rejected, and criticized. Yet those who criticize are also sinning and therefore live by a double standard. Such criticism implies that certain sins are worse than others, when in the eyes of God all sins are the same; we are all sinners who can only be saved by the grace of God, no matter what our sins are (there are seven sins described in Pro 6:16-19 as worse than others, concerning volitional responsibility and divine discipline). Society in general likes to see everything in its supposed “proper place,” and resents any deviation from the assigned thought, action, or personality. This is especially true of legalistic believers in their crusader arrogance and self-righteousness.

Among Christians, role model arrogance produces hypocrisy and legalism, the characteristics of self-righteous arrogance. Role model arrogance ignores the basic doctrine that all believers after salvation continue to have the sin nature and continue to commit personal sins, according to their ignorance of Bible doctrine or the lust pattern of the sin nature.

What is important is that your pastor-teacher emphasizes the mystery doctrine of the Church age and the execution of the predesigned plan of God. Role model arrogance distracts congregations from doctrine by emphasizing the personality of the pastor rather than the message. It’s not the man, it’s the message that counts. With Bible doctrine as top priority in your life, you learn to love God the Father, and you learn the virtue of impersonal love in human relationships. From knowledge of Bible doctrine, you find your perfect role model in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is our only true role model. The purpose of the predesigned plan of God for the Church-age is to create invisible heroes, not frustrated, arrogant people with unrealistic expectations. Role model arrogance intensifies problems in four basic steps:

1. An excessive admiration creates an idol out of another person.
2. The idol then shows their feet of clay (does something “wrong”).
3. When the idol does something wrong (real or imagined), there is a reaction on the part of those who created the idol. They become disillusioned.
4. Iconoclastic arrogance seeks to destroy the image the person has created.

They created the idol, and now they no longer admire the idol, so they seek to destroy the idol. Iconoclastic arrogance is divorced from reality in human relationships because of ignorance or rejection of Bible doctrine. Arrogance looks at an ordinary person and fashions him into an ideal of perfection, based on deluded idealism or romantic illusion. The idol of perfection created by this arrogance can be a spiritual image, a personality image, a hero image, a romantic image, or a beautiful image. This is not legitimate admiration, but excessive preoccupation with people.

The arrogant reaction of disillusion inevitably becomes vindictive, implacable, bitter, and vengeful, and is a major cause for apostasy among believers. Disappointment with friends, loved ones, or those in authority over us is normal, but disillusion from idolizing that person is failure on our part. We must take responsibility for our own thoughts, actions, and decisions. The arrogant iconoclast never blames himself for what he has done in creating the idol and then destroying it. In irrationality, he blames everything on the idol through his own fantasizing. Idolizing and then rejecting your own icon means transferring the blame for your own failures to other people.

Three problem-solving devices are necessary to bring the believer back to reality and recover from the devastation to the spiritual life—personal love for God the Father, occupation with Christ, and impersonal love for all mankind. When any believer combines unrealistic expectation with role model arrogance, he has established false standards for life and entered into a subtle system of arrogance that prevents cognition of Bible doctrine and the execution of the predesigned plan of God. To receive truth from your right pastor-teacher, you need to beware of the “feet of clay” syndrome and unrealistic expectation (role model arrogance). It is necessary to understand that even the greatest believers fail, which is why we have the failures of great men and women like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Samson, and David, recorded in the scriptures.

The authority of the pastor is taught in many passages, such as Heb 13:7, *“Remember those who led you [rule over you], who communicate the Word of God to you; considering the result of their way of life; imitate their doctrine.”* You “remember” pastors by attending Bible class, by praying for them, and by understanding that they have an abnormal life. The issue of a pastor’s “way of life” is his dedication and devotion to Bible doctrine, Heb 13:17.

The pastor is responsible to the Lord and not to the congregation. Therefore, when he gets out of line, he gets double discipline, Luk 12:48, 1Ti 5:17, Jam 3:1. Certain members of the congregation will inevitably become dissatisfied with their pastor, therefore, they will seek to discredit and slander him. Isa 54:17 is a warning to not tamper with God’s communicator: *“No weapon which is formed against you will prosper, and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and his vindication is from Me,’ decrees the Lord.”* Our main verb in Phi 4:9, *akouo*, says we should never focus on the communicator, but on the communication.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are given the “job profile” of the pastor so that you can make the right decisions in selecting your pastor.

- In Eph 4:11-16, he is to equip the saints for the work of service, and he causes the growth of believers in the body of Christ.
- In Col 1:23-29, he is to rejoice in his sufferings for the body of Christ and fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God, namely mystery doctrine, inculcating every believer and teaching every believer in order that he may present every person complete or mature in Christ.
- In 2Ti 2:24-26, he must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition.
- In 1Ti 3:1-9, he must be above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, uncontentious, and free from the love of money.
- In Tit 1:6-9, he is not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Paul instructs Titus in Tit 1:4-5, *“Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.”* The Greek word for “elder” is *presbuteros* and means the “old man,” in the sense of being in the highest authority, the “commanding officer”; it refers to the authority of the pastor. This is why Peter called himself an elder in 1Pe 5:1, John called himself an elder in 2Jo 1:1, and in Acts 20:28, Paul addresses the “elders” as pastors: *“Be on guard for yourselves and for the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has made you guardians to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with his own blood.”*

The point is that the pastor is only answerable to the Lord. He is the head of the local assembly and the one you are responsible to *akouo*—listen and concentrate. There must be order, and in order there must be headship, and this requires assumed responsibility. The pastor is responsible to the

Lord for the function of his ministry. The authority of the pastor is established through the faithful teaching of the mystery doctrine, and can only function through the power of the Holy Spirit inside the predesigned plan of God and the positive volition of the Royal Family of God directed toward the Bible teaching of the pastor. The pastor's communication demands a hearing, but he cannot force you to accept or reject it.

So in Phi 4:9, These things [doctrinal principles] also you have learned [manthano—from a teacher under strict academic discipline] and received [or accepted through metabolization of doctrine] and having heard [akouo—under academic discipline in an audience]. The members of the church at Philippi not only listened, but they listened and learned. No child of God can truly love Him apart from akouo, hearing the Word of God, and the consistent intake of Bible doctrine.

PROSPERITY

Philippians 4:9

10/03/04

So far our corrected translation of Phi 4:9 reads, “*These things* [doctrinal principles] *also you have learned* [*manthano*—learned from a teacher under strict academic discipline] *and received* [accepted through metabolization of doctrine] *and having heard* [under discipline] *and seen in me...*” The conjunction *kai* is correctly translated “and,” and then the phrase *eidete en emoi* is translated “seen in me.” This means not only to see but also perspective or perceptive ability, and therefore means to understand. This means doctrine in the heart (the right lobe of the soul). *Emoi* is the instrumental case of *ego*, and therefore we could say “by means of me,” or “through me,” in other words, through the teaching ministry of the pastor.

“...*Practice these things...*” Next we have the verb *prassete* which means to practice, to perform repeatedly or habitually, and to execute, followed by the demonstrative pronoun *tauta*, translated “these things.” It means to solve a problem, to apply principles to the situation and execute it. To get to supergrace you must have maximum *epignosis* in your right lobe, and it must be applied. The stronger you become spiritually, the more opposition you will face from Satan and the kingdom of darkness. This opposition will come in the form of your three great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, 1Jo 2:15-17.

“...*And the God of peace shall be with you.*” Again, “and” is the conjunction *kai*, followed by *ho theos* (the God) and the definite article *tes* (of) *eirene* (prosperity). *Eirene* means prosperity (the origin of the name Irene). *Eirene* in the *descriptive genitive singular* form is similar to the Hebrew *shalom*, which means prosperity—spiritual prosperity, temporal prosperity, prosperity by association, historical prosperity, dying prosperity, and every other category of prosperity, with God as the source. And God says you will have no prosperity from Him until your *gnosis* is *epignosis*, and until you have enough to crack the maturity barrier. The “God of prosperity” is God’s title in relationship to the supergrace life and the blessings that follow. “Shall be” is *estai*, the *future active indicative* form of the verb *eimi*, and is correctly translated “shall be.” There is no true prosperity unless it comes from God, or unless you are associated with a supergrace or ultra-supergrace believer.

The complete corrected translation of Phi 4:9 now reads, “*These things* [doctrinal principles] *also you have learned* [*manthano*—learned from a teacher under strict academic discipline] *and received* [accepted through metabolization of doctrine] *and having heard* [under discipline] *and have understood by means of me* [Paul’s teaching ministry]. *Be putting these into action and the God of prosperity shall be with you, all of you* [supergrace believers].”

God wants every believer to *eirene*, or prosper, according to the Bible. However, God has certain spiritual laws that He tells us we must follow in order to receive His highest and best in our lives. He has established spiritual principles that we are to follow concerning the giving of ourselves and our time, talent, and treasure. And if we can’t believe God’s promises in this realm, how can we believe His promises for eternal salvation and everything else we claim to believe?

There are two extreme positions that Christians take concerning prosperity. Some Christians hear that God wants them to prosper and follow Him simply for that reason. The opposite extreme is the belief that prosperity for Christians is wrong and that poverty is a godly thing. There is no question that the Bible warns us against false prosperity. However, we can prosper by following God’s spiritual decrees concerning prosperity, which are outlined in His Word, 3Jo 1:2, “*Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.*” There is a way to prosper that is not evil, and that is to follow God’s way for prosperity. In God’s plan, you will prosper physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially.

God created all the wealth on this earth, Hag 2:8, Psa 24:1, Psa 50:10. Did He create it all for unbelievers? Did He create it for hard-hearted, sinful individuals who curse Him, deny Him, disobey His Word, and couldn't care less about Him? Look how our Lord put it in Mat 7:7-11, *"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"*

God is no different from any other father; He wants the best for His children. He wants the world to see prosperous, joyful Christians. If He was willing to give us His only Son, why would He hold anything else back from us? He has already given us His best; He will not refuse to give us everything else, Rom 8:32. Many great men of God throughout the Bible have prospered as a result of following God's rules for prosperity. All Christians are heirs to these same blessings that Abraham received from God, Gal 3:9. Our God, the God of prosperity, wants us to receive blessing through following His laws of prosperity, Deu 8:18, 3Jo 1:2.

Many people are destroyed by their wealth because they do not obtain it through God's guidelines. However, there is absolutely nothing wrong with being prosperous and successful *if* we obtain and retain our prosperity as a result of following God and His Word. God wants us to possess prosperity, wealth, and money, but He does not want them to possess us. In fact, God gave us His precious promises for this very reason, 2Pe 1:4, *"For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature."*

Prosperity and abundance are part of God's divine nature, and He has given us more than 3,000 promises in His Word. The God of prosperity said in the very first chapter of the Bible, in Gen 1:26, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."* If God is prosperous, and if He created us to be just like He is, is it not obvious that He desires us to prosper and increase as well? Even in the creation of the earth, we see the manifestation of the abundance that God planned for us, even by looking within the fruits and vegetables of Gen 1:11, *"Then God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth'; and it was so."* God has provided the seeds so that we will be able to reproduce what we use many times over. It is something within that causes the fruits and vegetables to multiply, just as there is something within the believer that produces the multiplication of prosperity.

In Mat 13:23, seeds represent Bible doctrine, which produces fruit for the believer, *"And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."* In 2Co 9:9-11, *"As it is written, 'He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness abides forever. Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.'" The first chapter of Genesis tells us how God stocked the earth with fish, animals, and birds, and how He provided plants and fruit trees. He then created a man who was meant to enjoy this abundance and be master over the earth, Gen 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"*

God provided Adam with great abundance, but through the fall Adam surrendered his riches and his dominion over all the earth to Satan. This is why Satan is called a thief in Joh 10:1-10, because through his lies and his promotion of human viewpoint, he robs blessings and prosperity from mankind. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth for one purpose, to destroy Satan's work, 1Jo 3:8, *"The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil."* And our

Lord succeeded in His mission. Before ascending into heaven, He said in Mat 28:18, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." 2Co 8:9 says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

2 Corinthians chapters 8-9 deal primarily with the subject of finances. When the Lord became poor so that we could be rich, this applies to spiritual riches, but also refers to riches, wealth, and prosperity. As we examine the Scriptures carefully, we discover that the Lord Jesus Christ was not poor when He walked this earth 2,000 years ago. In fact, Mat 11:19 says, "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard.'" He ate fine food and drank good wine. He was not poor! Our Lord knew God's guidelines and instructions for prosperity. However, He also gave up everything at the Cross, even His clothing. He could not have been any poorer than He was at that time. When He died, He did not own one thing in this world.

Some people assume Jesus was poor because He said in Luk 9:58, "*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.*" Jesus did not have a permanent residence where He slept, because He was the first traveling evangelist. He was constantly on the move.

How can anyone say that Jesus was poor if He was able to meet the needs of the large group of people traveling with Him (Luk 10:1-8)? Jesus and His organization had a treasurer, Judas, Joh 13:29. Notice what kind of person the Lord chose to hold His finances. He was not concerned about people stealing from Him or getting the best of Him in a deal. He was a complete master of God's guidelines and instructions to prosper (e.g., Mat 6:33; Luk 6:38; Psa 84:11, 68:19; Pro 3:9-10, 11:25). He applied these principles repeatedly to meet His needs. The Lord Jesus Christ had the most genuine faith that has ever been seen on this earth, and as a result, He was able to turn little into plenty. He had absolutely no need for worldly material assets because He knew He could apply His faith to His Father's laws for prosperity, in order to obtain whatever He needed, as in Mar 8:13-20. When you're doing the will of God, there is always more than enough provided by God. This does not mean that you will not have any needs, as Paul mentioned in Phi 4. It does mean that when believers operate under God's guidelines, He always provides, 2Co 9:6-12. This is when Psa 23:6 becomes a reality: "*Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life.*"

When the tax collectors of Capernaum came to Peter and asked for money, our Lord was able to pay them, Mat 17:27, "Go down to the shore and throw in a line, and open the mouth of the first fish you catch. You will find a coin to cover the taxes for both of us; take it and pay them." Miraculous things happen to believers who have positive volition toward doctrine; those who live by perception, metabolization, and especially application of Bible doctrine have miracles manifested in their life in the realm of prosperity. It may not be the world's way of getting things, but it is God's way, Mar 10:29-30, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms."

Our Lord could have used these same laws to produce money for any of His other needs, if He so chose. When Peter and the other disciples had fished all night and came up empty, the Lord Jesus Christ was able to produce so many fish that the nets broke, Luk 5:1-11, and a similar instance is reported in Joh 21:1-11. When the Lord needed a donkey to ride into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, He did not have to rent or buy a donkey. He simply told two of His disciples to go into the village of Bethphage to look for a donkey and its colt tied alongside the road, Mat 21:2. He told them to take these animals and, if anyone asked what they were doing, to simply say that the Lord needed them. When He needed a room to serve the Passover meal, He did not go to a hotel to rent one. Instead, He sent two of His disciples into Jerusalem and told them to contact a "certain man" who

would lead them to another man, Mar 14:12-16. They would tell this man that they needed a large upper room and he would take care of everything, and this is exactly what happened.

In Mal 3:8-9, the Lord dealt with those who rejected God's guidelines for prosperity: "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!" The curse is mentioned in Hag 1:6c, "He who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." Solomon said Ecc 5:11, "When good things increase, those who consume them increase." The Lord continues in Mal 3:10-12, "'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,' says the Lord of hosts. 'And all the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land,' says the Lord of hosts."

Whatever any of us need in any realm, God's laws say that He will provide them when we keep Him first in every area of our lives. However, what does it mean to keep God first? One example of this is to never start any day without first of all spending a period of quiet time of prayer—a time when you can speak with Him and ask Him for guidance, direction, and help concerning anything that you're going to need throughout the day, Mat 7:8, "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened." Another example of putting God first is to set time aside for the study of His Word on a daily basis. This includes God being more important to you than your social life, and spending more time seeking God than you do on the computer, watching television, or enjoying your games and hobbies. Seeking God on a daily basis must be more important to you than seeking financial prosperity. Only by being honest with yourself will you ever begin to live in God's guidelines and instructions for prosperity. We must also put the needs of the Body of Christ ahead of our own needs; remember, the attitude of a servant is...

*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can, in all the places you can,
at all the times you can, to all the people you can,
as long as you ever can.*

Many Christians give God some time on a Sunday, perhaps one or two Bible studies during the week, and maybe a few minutes of prayer each day, and that is as far as they go. However, such a lifestyle obviously does not put God first. We need to deny ourselves each day and put Him first in every way, Luk 9:23, "And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'"

The world's system of prosperity puts many things ahead of God, such as money, success, possessions, and personal recognition. This is in violation of the divine laws for prosperity. God wants us to prosper, but only if the prosperity will never come ahead of Him. He desires us to enjoy riches, honor, and a long life, as long as we reach these goals by keeping Him first and always humbling ourselves before Him. This is God's "prescription" for prosperity in every area of our lives. We must believe that He will do what He says He will do. God's guidelines and instructions for prospering will only work to the degree that we apply them to our lives.

PROSPERITY, PART 2

1 John 1:1-8

10/10/04

Under the doctrine of prosperity, God's guidelines and instructions sound simple and basic, but they actually are not. One of the first principles for blessing from the God of prosperity is to make sure God has top priority in our life, Mat 6:33, *"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."*

Solomon sets a great example in 1Ki 3:5-12, *"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, 'Ask what you wish me to give you.' Then Solomon said, 'Thou hast shown great lovingkindness to Thy servant David my father, according as he walked before Thee in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward Thee; and Thou hast reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, Thou hast made Thy servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people who cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. So give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine?' And it was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said to him, 'Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.'"*

The wisdom that God gave Solomon was spiritual insight and wisdom to rule. He was wise in the political economy and did a marvelous job of ruling the nation. Because he asked for wisdom, esteeming God's Word above all else, we read in 1Ki 3:13, *"And I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days."* Whatever we need in any area of our lives, God's guidelines and instructions for prosperity teach us that He will provide when we keep Him first in every area of our lives.

There are many principles we need to know when it comes to keeping God first, and one is to always start your day spending a period of quiet time with God. It does not have to be a long time, but there should be some conversation with Him if you really believe that He is the most important one in your life. There should be a time when you can speak with Him and ask Him for guidance and direction and help concerning anything that you're going to need throughout the day. The power of prayer is revealed in 1Ch 4:9-10, *"And Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother named him Jabez saying, 'Because I bore him with pain.' Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, 'Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from harm, that it may not pain me!' And God granted him what he requested."* Jabez prayed that God would increase his capacity, that God's power might be with him, and that evil would not deceive him, and God granted him what he requested. Jabez was more honorable than his brothers and things started badly for him, but he remained faithful to God, and prayed an unusual prayer with extraordinarily results. The key was to put his relationship with God first—he was more honorable than his brothers.

Putting your relationship with God first also means to set time aside for the study of His Word on a daily basis, 2Co 13:5. Take a test: Do you place your family commitments ahead of God? Is God more important to you than your social life? Do you spend more time seeking God than you do on the computer, watching television, or enjoying your games and hobbies? Is seeking God on a daily basis more important to you than seeking financial prosperity? Many Christians believe that they always

keep God first, but if you are completely honest with each one of these questions, you might find that this is not the case.

“Do I actually place God ahead of each member of my family?” “Is God more important to me than my friendships?” The Bible teaches that if you are going to be a winner and receive God’s highest and best, you will have to overcome opposition, which comes in many areas. You will be hindered by your friends, family members, co-workers, members of the opposite sex, and, of course, your enemies, from fulfilling the plan of God. You will have distractions sent by the kingdom of darkness to stop your spiritual momentum. This happened to Abraham when he stayed with his father because of sentimentality, Gen 11:31-32. Jonathan also chose his father over God’s people and died on the battlefield, 1Sa 31:2. King Ahab chose his wife Jezebel over the plan of God, 1Ki 16:31, and Samson chose a woman named Delilah, Jdg 16:4. Many of God’s servants have been led astray by another person whom they love.

The Bible teaches that when loved ones hold you back, then your loved ones have to go. Many times personal loves hinder spiritual growth because the believer is forced to compromise certain standards and convictions that are developed through doctrinal growth. Your family life and social life are not worth compromising, Mat 10:34-39. Our Lord’s own earthly family, including His mother, thought that He had lost His senses and that He was out of His mind, Mar 3:21. At one point His own family did not believe that he was the Son of God, Joh 7:5. They did not come to believe in Him until *after* His resurrection when He appeared to His brother James. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that His followers are even closer to Him than His natural family and closest relatives. In fact, we are told that His disciples took the place of His earthly family because they had believed in Him, Mat 12:50. Our relationship with God must take priority over relationships with people, and our number one priority demands that we have a right relationship with God. As an expression of this, emphasis on people over God must be set aside.

“Do I spend more time seeking God each day than I do listening to the lies perpetuated from the cosmic system through technology?” With all the garbage in the media today, Christians will still spend more time with this than they do in the Word of God. They are filling their minds with all the deceitful notions and propaganda from the cosmic system, as in 2Co 4:4. We are told throughout the Word of God to be careful what we allow into our souls through the eyes and ears, Mar 4:24; Luk 8:18; Pro 16:25, “*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*”; Joh 7:24, “*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*” This is why God tells us to be very careful of what type of information we allow into our souls. You may not think that it will affect you, but inevitably it will, Isa 59:5.

Just as we can eat God’s words by allowing His Word to enter our soul, the “god of this world” uses his power through words to influence the believer and the unbeliever. We have all been taken in by the lies perpetuated by the cosmic system, the prime purveyor of the lies that keep the truth hidden. Cosmic thinking has been so deeply ingrained in almost every human being that one can only see what is real through divine viewpoint. For many people, when the truth is too strong to ignore, they hide it from sight and attempt to forget it because they can’t handle the truth.

“Do I spend more time seeking God each day than I do watching television or enjoying hobbies?” Many Christians give God some time on a Sunday, perhaps one or two Bible studies during the week, and maybe a few minutes of prayer each day. And in the lives of many Christians, that is “it” as far as God is concerned. Such a lifestyle obviously does not *put God first*. Many have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, but have never truly allowed Him to govern their entire lives. To put Him first, we need to deny ourselves each day and put Him first in every area of our lives, Luk 9:23, “*And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’*”

The average person is seeking fame, fortune, and long life, and God's Word tells us exactly how to achieve them, Pro 22:4, *"The reward of humility and the fear [respect] of the Lord are riches, honor and life."* There is nothing wrong with riches and wealth, provided they are obtained God's way. God wants us to enjoy riches, honor, and a long life, as a result of always humbling ourselves before Him. This is God's "prescription" for prosperity. God does not allow us to put people, money, hobbies, or anything else ahead of Him, Exo 20:3, *"You shall have no other gods before Me."* The world's system of prosperity puts temporal things ahead of God. In fact, many people get so caught up with earning money that they think about it almost constantly, and although most of them do not realize it, money has become their god.

This all-consuming desire for money, or anything else in life, is *exactly the kind of desire that we should have for God*. We should think about Him all the time. Your attitude toward the Word of God is your exact attitude toward God Himself. God's two requirements for perfect peace are very clear—(1) we must keep Him first at all times by *keeping our mind on Him*, and (2) we must *trust Him completely*. God's guidelines and instructions to prosper will only work to the degree that we keep Him first in our lives, *completely and absolutely ahead of everything else*. They are based on total dedication of our lives to Him. If God really is first in our lives, why should we ever be worried about any problem? If we are worried about any problem, we are actually allowing that problem to take first place ahead of God? Instead of focusing on the problems, we should focus on the promises of God's Word and the great ability of the Holy Spirit living inside us. A peace is available to us, is a perfect, complete peace. The blessings that we receive from God will be in direct proportion to the degree of our lasting commitment to Him.

Another necessity in God's guidelines for prosperity is to renew our minds so that we will understand that God's way for prosperity is different from the world's way, Isa 55:8. We need to renew our minds in order to change our long-established thought processes from the world's methods of prosperity to God's, as in Pro 3:14. Sadly, many Christians believe in the world's way of prospering and reject doctrinal principles of prosperity. One of the biggest obstacles to learning and applying God's guidelines for prosperity is the tremendous difference between them and the world's system of prosperity. This requires strong faith, developed through the inculcation of God's Word, Rom 10:17.

Many of us have followed the world's system for many years, and it is not easy to change from long-established and ingrained habits and patterns; however, that is exactly what we must do! In order to understand and apply God's guidelines, we must stop conforming to the world's system and renew our minds with God's Word. Our minds are like computers, which must be re-programmed with God's laws for prosperity. Most of us need to feed a great deal of new data into our "computers."

In 3Jo 1:2 the Apostle John writes, *"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."* God wants us to be successful and healthy, but notice the "qualifier" at the end: *"just as your soul prospers."* These last five words are the cause of the prosperity and health God wants so much for us, and we will experience this in exact proportion to the degree that our souls are prospered and made brand new. The soul is the combination of our heart, our mind, and our emotions, and a prosperous soul is one that is filled with God's Word. Therefore, we must constantly engage in the process of converting our souls from the world's ways to His ways. If we follow God's laws, even the most simple person will receive God's wisdom, Psa 19:7. God's laws will never change, we are the ones who have to change.

Now, what exactly must be done so that our souls will prosper? This question is clearly answered in 3Jo 1:1-8, *"The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. For I was very glad when brethren came and bore witness to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you*

accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; and they bear witness to your love before the church; and you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men, that we may be fellow workers with the truth.” “Walking in the truth” causes us to produce divine good, even toward strangers. God wants His truth inside us, and nothing gives Him greater joy than to see His children walking in truth, which means to live our daily lives in the light of Bible doctrine.

We often cancel the effectiveness of God’s laws because of our “tradition,” the way we have always done things, Mar 7:13. God never think in terms of shortages. There is no place for such thinking in His mind, and He does not want us to allow this thinking into our minds. If our minds are continually filled with thoughts of doubt and unbelief, as in Mat 13:58, how can we possibly enjoy prosperity in our lives?

God wants us to renew our minds because He wants to restore our souls, to make the soul “brand new” with divine viewpoint, and then such passages like Psa 23:1-2 will become a reality: *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.”* We must get rid of our old ways and start out anew, cleaning up our minds daily. Christians who have not renewed their minds in God’s Word do not have the *spiritual eyesight* to see their way out of seemingly unsolvable problems. God does not want us surrendering to the problems that overwhelm so many people of this world. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price at Calvary to give us victory over all of our problems, Joh 16:33.

God gave us His Word, full of instructions on exactly what to do in order to overcome the problems of this world. He gave us the Holy Spirit inside us to guide us in the understanding of the truth, Joh 16:13. Christians who have paid the price of diligently renewing their minds will focus on the solution; those who have not, will focus on the problem. So we need to feed our human spirit every day with spiritual food from God’s Word, which is transformed into a spiritual energy, which is called *pistis*, or “faith,” 2Co 5:7, *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”* We should feast on God’s Word, and regardless of what we might be going through on the outside, we will always have joy on the inside, Jer 15:16, *“Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart.”*

God does not want our imaginations running rampant about our financial problems or the problems of the world. He wants our minds renewed so that we can cast down these negative thoughts and focus totally on the promises in His Word, 2Co 10:3-5, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”* If we do not continually renew our minds, we leave them wide open to doubts, fears, and temptations. Our soul cannot prosper unless our mind is under control, and our mind will never be under control, unless we can cast out negative thoughts and bring our thoughts completely in line with the Word of God.

Too many Christians today focus so much on the problems of the world that they ultimately become part of those problems because they are so identified with them. Instead of focusing so much on the problems that surround us, we need to redirect our attention to the solution. You are the beneficiary of many wonderful blessings from God, yet if you do not know these things, you will lose out. Many believers live as paupers on earth even though they are the children of the God who controls the entire universe.

PROSPERITY, PART 3

Hebrews 11:6

10/17/04

An important principle in God's guidelines for prosperity is found in Heb 11:6, "*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*" The phrase "without faith" is the Greek prepositional phrase *choris* (without) *pisteos* (doctrine), which is a reference to "without what is believed," or "without doctrine resident in the soul." "Impossible" is the accusative singular adjective *adunaton*, which means impossible or powerless. Therefore, we could translate Heb 11:6, "*And without doctrine resident in the soul, powerless to please Him.*" The phrase "to please Him" is the verb *euarestesai*, which means to please or to be approved of by God. This is a *constantive aorist* tense, which gathers up into one entirety the action of the verb, indicating that pleasing God takes consistent and persistent positive volition toward doctrine. This simply means taking advantage of every possible decision to take in doctrine, regardless of any distractions or traps in life.

If you desire to please God, you must make daily decisions to take in doctrine. The deliberate aim of your life as a member of the Royal Family of God should be to please Him, Col 1:9-10, "*For this reason also, since the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with metabolized doctrine [epignosis] of His will by means of all wisdom and spiritual understanding, in order that you might walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing God in all things, bearing fruit in every good work, constantly growing by means of metabolized [epignosis] doctrine from the source of God.*"

Since you are your own priest, you are responsible for your own life before God, and therefore you have a direct responsibility to God. The first question you should ask yourself is, "Who are you trying to please in this life?" If you lie to yourself, there's no way you'll ever realize what is important in life. Are you trying to please others and please yourself, or are you trying to please God? (See Gal 1:10, Col 3:22, 1Th 2:4, Rom 15:1-3.)

As we advance in the predesigned plan of God, we will face the danger of *inflexibility*, which causes intolerance of others and violations of the Royal Family Honor Code. It turns us against friends, loved ones, and others. We become thoughtless and hypersensitive, and the Royal Family Honor Code demands sensitivity and thoughtfulness of others. Inevitably you have to come to the place, often through discipline, and often through many tragedies, heartaches, and difficulties, you have to come to the place where God is going to be pleased. You are a member of the Royal Family of God, and you have a home, not here, but in Heaven, where your true citizenship resides.

1Th 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received doctrine from us as to how you ought to walk and please God.

Pleasing God includes positive volition and facing certain tests and passing them. Pleasing God includes the assembling of yourselves together and recognizing the authority of the pastor-teacher. None of us can please God without doctrine in the soul, and none of us have ever received doctrine in the soul without submitting to academic discipline.

Heb 11:6 continues, "*And without doctrine resident in the soul it is impossible to please Him, for he who is occupied with the God must believe...*" The word "for" is the explanatory use of the particle *gar*, which indicates why there is only one way to please God in this life. "He who comes" is the noun *proserchomenon*, meaning to approach or to *occupy oneself with*. Many people get distracted for one reason or another, but the key is consistency. No matter where you go in life, you will face the issue of authority and discipline, therefore, this is actually a verb of *obligation*. There are two directions we must be aware of concerning obligations:

1. Refusing to place yourself in a position of obligation to others, as Abram did in Gen 14:22-24.
2. Being obligated to God for the many blessings He has provided for you, Deu 6:10-19.

In Psa 116:12-14, David said, "What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I shall pay my vows to the Lord, oh in the presence of all His people." In Heb 11:6, this verb of obligation, translated "must," means compulsion of duty, or necessity growing out of a given situation.

"And without doctrine resident in the soul it is impossible to please Him, for he who is occupied with the God must believe..." The word for "believe" is *pisteusai*, meaning to believe, to be *convinced* of something so much that you become dogmatic about it. It is in the *constantive aorist* tense, which gathers into one "ball of wax" the concept of the verb—the believer "must be convinced." First of all, you expose yourself to a little doctrine and it becomes resident in your soul. Then, that residual doctrine must convince you of the importance of going on with doctrine. Then, the accumulation of doctrine in your frame of reference means that you are convinced that you must go on with doctrine, and then you receive even more doctrine, and then you get tests. Whatever it is that tests you, the frame of reference now says one thing ("Bible doctrine in your soul"), and the old sin nature says another ("doctrine is not important").

"And without doctrine resident in the soul it is impossible to please Him, for he who is occupied with the God must be convinced by resident doctrine that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." The phrase "He is," is the *present active indicative* form of the verb *eimi*, which means "He keeps on being," which refers to essence of God, and the fact that God exists and He has a plan. The second "He is," is actually the *present middle indicative* form of *ginetai*, which means to become.

"And without doctrine resident in the soul it is impossible to please Him, for he who is occupied with the God must be convinced by resident doctrine that He is, and that He becomes a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." The fact that God is a rewarder is a potential depending upon your attitude toward doctrine. Doctrine is the basis for divine blessing in your life. God becomes a rewarder, not of all believers, but of those who seek Him diligently through doctrine resident in the soul. If you have doctrine resident in the soul, it is because you have been making decisions to "seek Him." This means that Bible doctrine becomes an "obsession" in life. It means to seek out, to search for, to continually habitually seek. Seeking Him is gutting it out, day in and day out, with doctrine. Our entire corrected translation of Heb 11:6 now reads: *"And without doctrine [resident in the soul] it is impossible to please Him, for he who is occupied with the God must be convinced by [resident doctrine] that He is, and that He becomes a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

We win God's approval by perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine, by working hard at studying His Word so that we will not be ashamed, 2Ti 2:15-16, *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."* Are you ashamed at the amount of time that you spend studying the instructions that God has given to us? Can you fulfill 1Pe 3:15, *"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you"?* There are no shortcuts. None of us should expect God to prosper us unless we are willing to pay the price of working hard at studying His Word. Studying the Bible is not always a high-flying, supernatural experience; it is often laborious and tedious. The Bible will make us think like we have never thought before, and it carries with it great reward, if we are willing to pay the price to dig into it, Pro 8:21, 9:11.

A warning concerning the rewards for the Church-age believer is given in 2Jo 1:6-9, *"And this is virtue-love, that we walk according to His commands [the mystery doctrine of the Church-age]. This is the command, just as you have heard from the beginning that you should walk in it [the predesigned plan of God]. For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh [in our human nature]. This is the mark of a deceiver and those against Christ. Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished [your momentum and your spiritual growth], but that you may receive a full reward [the imputation of your escrow blessings]*

in time and in eternity]. *Anyone who goes too far [who keeps advancing out of bounds] and does not abide [remain] in the teaching of Christ does not have fellowship with God. The one who abides in the teaching [the predesigned plan of God], he has fellowship with both the Father and the Son.*” Our Lord’s last words to His people in the Church-age are written in Rev 22:12, *“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”*

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are an heir of many wonderful blessings from God, yet if you do not *know* these things, you will never experience them. When it comes to God’s guidelines and instructions to prosper, there is great significance to *meditation* on His word. To see what it means to “meditate” on scripture, we will first go to Jos 1:8, *“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”* This is one of the most important scriptures in the entire Bible for anyone who wishes to prosper, in fact, it is the only verse containing the words “prosperous” and “success.” This verse reveals three things that God instructs us to do if we intend to be prosperous and successful.

1. We must speak His Word constantly, which means His scriptures should constantly come out of our mouths.
2. We should constantly study His Word and meditate “day and night” on what it says. The word “meditate” is the Hebrew verb *hagah*, which means to ponder, meditate, study, and examine. When the Bible talks about meditation, it is not some obscure concept of “contemplating infinity”; it is a mental activity of studying and learning.
3. We should live our lives exactly as His Word tells us to live, and we should know His Word so well that we conduct our lives “according to all that is written in it.”

If we obey these three commands, we are given a promise: *“Then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”* This is said by a God who cannot lie, Tit 1:2, Heb 6:18.

The second place in scripture that ties meditation and prosperity together is Psa 1:1-3, *“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.”* God tells us that, if we want to prosper in everything we do, He will bless “the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked.” This includes the world’s counsel on prosperity and finances.

God does not want us looking at life the way worldly people do. Rom 12:2 says to not conform to the world’s way of living, but to transform our lives by following His laws. We do this by loving His Word so much that we delight in it and can’t get enough of it. We will be so hungry and thirsty spiritually, that we will meditate on and study His word day and night in order to discover everything we possibly can about God and His laws for governing our lives. We will be like a tree planted by a river, Psa 1:3, *“And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.”* No matter what kind of droughts we face and how severe they may be, the leaves of such a tree will never wither and dry up, as they continually draw water from the river of the Word of God.

Even in a financial drought, believers can still prosper and bear fruit. We can still prosper in everything that we do if we have meditated day and night on God’s Word, so that our “roots” reach deep into God’s laws of prosperity. Many Christians will “wither” during a financial drought, because of lack of knowledge of God’s laws, Hos 4:6, *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”*

Psa 112:1-3 Praise the Lord! How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, Who greatly delights in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.

God's Word should be an absolute delight to us, because His Word tells us everything we will ever need to know in order to live fulfilled lives here on this earth. As you get to know Him better, He will give you, through His great power and limitless grace, everything you need for living a truly prosperous life. Once we truly understand what this means, we truly delight in God's Word and God's ways, and we will be compelled to meditate day and night in His Word. If we follow this lifestyle continually, we will prosper in every area of our lives, financially, spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

PROSPERITY, PART 4

Mark 4:3-20

10/24/04

In our study of prosperity, we must look at God's perspective on work and discipline. In order to lead prosperous, successful lives, God expects us to work hard and discipline ourselves. Many Christians believe that they can have anything they want simply by asking God for it and expecting Him to give it to them. However, the Word of God clearly teaches us that we need to do the very best that we can with the abilities that God has given us, Col 3:22-24, Ecc 9:10, *"Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might."* God's guidelines and instructions for prosperity definitely require us to work hard, in order to receive God's highest and best for our lives, 2Th 3:10. Unfortunately, the attitude of "the world owes me a living," seems to be very prevalent today. Many people are content to put as little into their work as they can get away with. Too many employees are receiving a full day's pay for less than a full day's work. They live by the concept, "I can get more by doing nothing." And they are becoming slaves, dependent on the government and others, and they are never content with wealth.

This is the slave mentality, emphasizing security over freedom, as in Num 11:1-6, *"Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the Lord; and when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire died out. So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burned among them. And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, 'Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.'"*

To these Jews, security was more important than freedom. They actually wished to return to Egypt, where they had been enslaved, because Egypt represented security. The freedom mentality is something that we must learn, and as believers we cannot have freedom without doctrine. Spiritual freedom is the heritage of the new birth, 2Co 3:17, *"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."* Psa 119:45 describes spiritual freedom for the Old Testament saints: *"I will walk in freedom because I seek Your doctrines."* In Joh 8:32, *"You shall know the doctrine and the doctrine shall make you free."* None of us are naturally freedom oriented; by instinct we are security oriented. However, the only true security comes from freedom. You do not develop freedom from security; you must develop security from your freedom.

We are not to use prayer and miracles as "shortcuts." We must work hard and diligently, Pro 10:4, *"Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."* Pro 22:29 says, *"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men."* The Word of God tells us that we should work hard to reveal the virtues of Christianity to those around us, 1Th 4:11-12 (Amplified Bible), *"Work with your hands, as we charged you; so that you may bear yourselves becomingly, be correct and honorable and command the respect of the outside world, being self-supporting, dependent on nobody and having need of nothing."*

The Word of God uses the simplistic illustration of the ant to teach us this principle. The ant has no boss telling it what to do, but instinctively works hard to provide its needs, Pro 6:6, *"Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise."* Pro 6:11 warns us of the danger of just a little laziness and slothfulness here and there, a day off here and there: *"And your poverty will come in like a vagabond [drifter, wanderer], and your need like an armed man."* One day the lazy man will wake up and find that poverty has overtaken him and, like an armed robber, has take everything from him, the financed home, the car, and everything else he thought he owned. We cannot continue to violate God

guidelines and instructions to prosper; sooner or later we will pay the price. Instead of robbing our employers by doing less than our best, God's Word tells us to work as hard as we can, Ecc 9:10, *"Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might."*

The Word of God teaches us to go "all out." God wants us to do more than what is expected. Many people are looking for ideal working conditions, longer vacations, more leisure, etc., but we are told to do our job as unto the Lord. Whatever we are called to do, God's Word tells us to put everything we have into it, because we are working for Jesus Christ, Col 3:23. Our job is to do the very best we can with the human abilities God has given us and trust in Him for the rest. If a believer does not do his best at his work, he will soon start to feel empty and unfulfilled, Ecc 9:9. On the other hand, when we put in a solid day's work, we receive a sense of inner satisfaction, Ecc 5:12, *"The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much."*

God wants us to do our best, but the fact is that the great things of life really are done *through* us, not by us. As Solomon said in Psa 127:1, *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."* God will do great things through us, if we will first of all do our very best and then trust completely in Him to take it from there. Many Christians miss out by going to one extreme or the other—either they do not do their very best, or they think that they have to do everything by themselves. If we want to be free from the bondage of problems, we must have discipline, which is needed to continually study God's Word, Joh 8:31-32, *"If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* This freedom is obtained by continuing in God's Word and never quitting but continually going forward.

The one major obstacle that blinds Christians from realizing their freedom in Christ is lack of *consistency*. Many Christians start studying God's Word, and perhaps even stick with it for a while, but do not continue their perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine consistently. The words "disciple" and "discipline" originate from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means pupil or student, and is derived from the root word *discere*, which means to learn or discern. If we really want to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we must have the discipline to get into God's Word and stay there. We will only consistently obey God's Word if we follow His "perfect law of liberty," the law that sets us free, Jam 1:25, *"But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does."*

To be great at anything in life requires a tremendous amount of time, effort, and devotion, and this is true of natural talents, just as it is true in the spiritual realm. You have been given at least 40 fantastic gifts at the moment of salvation, but these things must be studied, learned, and applied in order for you to reap the benefits, Psa 111:2, *"Great are the works of the Lord; they are studied by all who delight in them."*

God wants us to realize how precious our time is, Psa 90:12. He does not want us to waste the time that He has given us, but make the most of it, Eph 5:15-16. This is why we read in Mar 4:15, *"And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them."* Satan has all kinds of ways to get believers away from doctrine (1Ti 5:15), as we are warned in 2Co 2:11, *"In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes."* In 2Co 11:14, *"Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."*

If it takes us four years to graduate from worldly high schools and another four years to graduate from college, why should any of us expect to learn God's great spiritual laws without spending a great deal of time and effort in studying and meditating on God's Word? If we want God to prosper us, we must give ourselves wholly to continual perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine, 1Ti 4:15 (King James Version), *"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."* The word translated "meditate" comes from the Greek word *meletao*, which means to revolve in the mind, to meditate, to attend to carefully, and to study. Many

Christians quit when they don't see the results they were expecting. However, faithfulness to Bible doctrine over time will develop lasting habits and patterns, Joh 8:31; Act 2:42, 9:31, 14:22; 2Ti 3:14. In all these passages we see the results of continuing and not quitting. When we hear the Word of God, a seed is literally sown in our hearts, in fact, the Bible calls the Word of God a seed, Luk 8:11, *"The seed is the Word of God"*; 1Pe 1:23, *"For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God."*

To sow a seed means to plant a thought. Unfortunately, many people hear God's Word, and as soon as they stop studying, they have forgotten most of what they heard, Jam 1:23, *"For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was."* In this case, the seed of God's Word never has the opportunity to take root and grow. This is why *rebound* (naming and citing our sins) before the study of God's Word is so important; it gives us the opportunity to prepare ourselves to concentrate on the Word of God. As the Apostle Paul stated in 1Co 7:35, *"And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord."* The Living Bible translation of Psa 119:78 reads, *"Let the proud be disgraced, for they have cut me down with all their lies. But I will concentrate my thoughts upon your laws."*

Many people are distracted when the Word of God is being spoken, and therefore they do not concentrate and so the seed never gets sown, in Mar 4:3-8, *"Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow; and it came about that as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. And other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. And other seeds fell into the good soil and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."*

The Word of God will only grow in our hearts to the degree that we continue our doctrinal intake and learn how to think in the realm of divine viewpoint, so that it becomes a part of our frame of reference. However, knowledge by itself is not sufficient to activate God's prosperity. God's guidelines and instructions come from divine viewpoint and a spiritual realm that is completely different from the natural world that we live in; God's guidelines come from *epignosis*, doctrine metabolized. We need to trust and apply these principles, and this is where faith comes in. God does not want us trying to figure out His way to prosper with our human viewpoint. The first step to activating His laws is to get them inside our heart, Pro 23:7, *"For as he thinks within himself, so he is."* This is why we are told to meditate day and night in His Word, Psa 1:2.

When we work diligently at meditating on God's Word, this will change every aspect of our lives because the significant events in our lives are based upon what we believe deep down in our heart. Therefore, we are instructed in Pro 4:23, *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."* God wants us to fill our hearts and our minds with His Word, Deu 11:18, Psa 37:31.

In difficult economic times, people stockpile money and hoard up food and other necessities. This urge to store things up is a worldly manifestation of the spiritual "storing up" that God requires. He wants us store up doctrine in our hearts so that we will respond instinctively to any crisis. He wants His Word to be so established in our hearts that we will not be afraid of any problems that come upon us, Psa 112:5-8.

Instead of concerning ourselves with bad news, our hearts should be fixed upon God's Word, trusting completely in His promises, Nah 1:7. No matter how difficult a situation may appear, a heart that is truly established in God's Word will never waver. Act 19:20 says of the early disciples, *"So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing."* The Greek word for "prevail" is *ischuo*, meaning

to be strong and powerful. God wants His Word to be so strong and powerful inside us that it will prevail over every problem. This is what it means to have faith, and the divine promise is that those who have faith will be rewarded by God, Heb 11:6, *“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* There is nothing to fear, no need to worry. God will always come through to the degree that we believe and trust in His character and nature. God will do His part, but we have to do ours. If we want God to prosper us in all areas of our life, we must give ourselves wholly to continual study and meditation in His Word, Pro 13:13, 16:20. All things do not work together for good in your life just because you’re a Christian and God is your Father, Rom 8:28, *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God.”*

Our minds are like computers, and our hearts store the data, and when a problem enters our lives, our minds should immediately turn to the storage area in our hearts and search out the appropriate laws of God that will deal with the problem we are facing. We must then respond based upon our faith in what God’s Word says, and not upon the problem itself. When faced with difficult problems, instead of being full of cares and worries, God wants us to go to Him with a faith that is based solely upon the promises in His Word. If we follow these simple instructions, God’s Word says that we will receive a peace so great that it will be beyond our human understanding.

Phi 4:6-9 Stop worrying about anything, but in every circumstance through prayer and through supplication for personal needs after thanksgivings, let your requests or petitions be revealed to the God. In fact, that spiritual peace and prosperity from the source of the God, which surpasses or rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts [right lobes], also your motivation [minds] in Christ Jesus. From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation], whatever personal loves exist, whatever is commendable, if there is any virtue [and there is for the mature believer], and if anything worthy of praise [and there is for the mature believer], be concentrating on these things. These things [doctrinal principles] also you have learned [manthano—learned from a teacher under strict academic discipline] and received [accepted through metabolization of doctrine] and having heard [under discipline] and having understood by means of me [Paul’s teaching ministry], be putting these into action, and the God of prosperity shall be with you, all of you [supergrace believers].

THE DANGERS OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

The Apostle Paul at Jerusalem

Acts 21:1-26

10/31/04

Philippians 4:1-9, in our amplified translation, reads: *Therefore, my beloved brethren [members of the Royal Family of God] whom I desire to see or be with, my source of happiness and wreath of glory, so stand firm [be advancing, not retreating] in the Lord, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be having the same viewpoint or to think objectively by means of the Lord. Indeed, I request also you, true Syzygus [genuine one who is a real man], to help or to assist these women of such quality who have fought by my side in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. Keep on having perfect happiness by means of the Lord at all times; once more I repeat the command, keep on having perfect happiness. Let your supergrace mental attitude be known to all men. The Lord is near. Stop worrying about anything, but in every circumstance through prayer and through supplication for personal needs after thanksgivings let your requests or petitions be revealed to the God. In fact, that spiritual peace and prosperity from the source of the God, which surpasses or rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts [right lobes], also your motivation [minds] in Christ Jesus. From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation], whatever personal loves exist, whatever is commendable, if there is any virtue [and there is for the mature believer] and if anything worthy of praise [and there is for the mature believer], be concentrating on these things. These things [doctrinal principles] also you have learned [manthano—learned from a teacher under strict academic discipline] and received [accepted through metabolization of doctrine] and having heard [under discipline] and having understood by means of me [Paul's teaching ministry], be putting these into action, and the God of prosperity shall be with you, all of you [supergrace believers].*

We are now ready to begin verse 10, *“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.”* The first word in this verse is the particle *de*, used as a transitional conjunction, and although it is translated “but,” in this context it actually means “now.” The verb translated “rejoiced” is the aorist passive indicative form of *chairo*, which is *echaren*. It means to have happiness, and here it specifically means sharing the happiness of God by thinking with the thoughts of God. The aorist tense is a *constantive aorist*, which encompasses the entire time that Paul was in supergrace, culminating in his now sharing the happiness of God. In the passive voice, Paul receives the action of the verb; he has been given this joy, and he now has the opportunity to express it. The indicative mood declares the reality of Paul having received God's happiness. We could therefore translate Phi 4:10, *“Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly...”*

Paul has recovered from his reversionistic experience in Jerusalem and is not compromising his doctrinal beliefs any longer. He was in prison because he had disobeyed God. The manifestation of his recovery of supergrace status is found in his possession of perfect happiness and the fact that his happiness is stimulated by the obvious interest of the Philippian church.

The story begins in Act 21:1-4, *“And when it came about that we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo. And after looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.”* For seven days God the Holy Spirit was using these

disciples to warn Paul *not* to go to Jerusalem. Paul should have been going west to Rome, Italy, France, and Spain; instead he is heading east to Jerusalem. Paul was behaving like many of God's people today—involved in emotionalism and tradition, in Paul's case, his emotional bond to Jerusalem. He is about to leave the geographical will of God.

Many believers are so emotionally attached to a certain geographical area that it hinders their spiritual life. It's one thing to head in the wrong direction, it's another thing to actually arrive there; it's one thing to think of a sin, it's another to actually commit the act. And when Paul walks through the gates of Jerusalem, he will be out of the geographical will of God. We read in Jam 1:15, *"Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."* Slowly but surely, Paul is pulling away from his relationship and fellowship with God.

Act 21:5 continues, *"And when it came about that our days there were ended [they accomplished what they desired], we departed and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. And after kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another."* The word "escorted" is the Greek verb *propempeo*, which means to accompany someone with high respect or esteem. Even though Paul had rejected their warning, they still honored and respected him. This is the Royal Family honor code. We are to present the truth to each other, but not force the truth upon each other, Rom 14:1.

Act 21:6-12 continues, *"Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again. And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven [one of the original seven deacons], we stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. And as we were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. [A second warning is now given to Paul by God.] And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, 'This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' And when we had heard this, we [Paul's companions traveling with him] as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem [Paul's third warning]."*

Everyone who cares about Paul is trying to convince him to stop his disastrous course toward Jerusalem, but Paul already has his mind made up, and we see his rejection in Act 21:13, *"Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'" His answer sounds so good, but it comes from his emotions, which are controlling his soul at this time. Paul was emotionally attached to Jerusalem, where as a young man he was very popular and successful. He has all kinds of friends there, saved and unsaved, or so he thinks. Paul declares his attitude, which is a good attitude, but he is going in the wrong direction with it. You can have a good attitude and good intentions, and be very sincere, but if you are going in the wrong direction, it does not matter. You can have the right attitude in the wrong place, just as you can have the wrong attitude in the right place. We see the response of Paul's companions in Act 21:14, *"And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done!'"**

Paul still has the right to make his own mistakes without interference from others and the right to make his own decisions, right or wrong; this is the privilege and responsibility of all believers. Bible doctrine is the basis of making your own decisions, not coercion from others. Paul's companions will follow him even though they know he is wrong; they allow the Lord to deal with the situation and do not get in His way. This is a great temptation, when you know you are completely right and someone else is completely wrong, but you have to put them in the Lord's hands. You can warn them in love, but the moment you start trying to force them to make a certain choice or manipulate them,

you are out of line. Therefore, they allow Paul the privacy and freedom of choice, regardless of whether he is right or wrong.

Act 21:15-17 continues, *“And after these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. And some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge. And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.”* Paul is out of fellowship and out of the geographical will of God, and at this time Jerusalem was full of believers under legalism and reversionism. According to 2Co 8, Phi 4, and 1Co 16:3, Paul brought a *large sum of money* with him for the Jews, which is obviously why “the brethren received us gladly.” The believers at Jerusalem were in poverty because they were under divine discipline for rejecting the grace of God.

Act 21:18-20 continues, *“And now the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders [pastors] were present. And after he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry [namely, the grace of God]. And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law...’”*

The Jews at Jerusalem were being taught that the Christian way of life was living morally and following ascetic taboos. While Paul greets them and tells about the grace of God among the Gentiles, they have something else in mind. They are disturbed by his presence, but they are delighted to see his money. So what do they want Paul to do?...Act 21:21-24, *“...and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.”*

Everything Paul had taught about grace is contrary to his behavior here. He is about to make the greatest mistake of his life because of emotionalism. This is the same man who wrote the book of *Galatians*, which teaches:

1. A believer under the Law makes Christ a minister of sin, Gal 2:17.
2. The believer has died to the Law, Gal 2:19.
3. The believer receives all benefits of the Spirit through faith, Gal 3:1-5.
4. The Law brings nothing but condemnation, Gal 3:10-14.
5. God’s promised blessings to Abraham, of which all believers partake (Rom 11), precede the giving of the Law, Gal 3:15-17.
6. The Law has no power to give or sustain life, Gal 3:21.
7. The Law is intended only for the immature, while Church-age believers are positionally adult sons, Gal 3:23-4:7.
8. The Law is a bondage to the believer, Gal 4:9.
9. Law and grace are mutually exclusive principles, Gal 4:21-31.
10. The believer has an abiding freedom in Christ, Gal 5:1.
11. To keep even part of the Law, one must keep all the Law, Gal 5:2-4.
12. The persuasion to put us under the Law is not from God, Gal 5:8.
13. Legalism does away with the offense of the Cross, Gal 5:11.
14. All the Law is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit, Gal 5:16-24.
15. The life of the believer must be sustained on the same principle as his new birth and regeneration, Gal 5:25.
16. Our sin calls for our dealing with grace, not with the Law, Gal 6:1-5.

17. All who advocate the Law for the believer cannot keep it themselves, and their intention is ultimately glory in the flesh, Gal 6:13.

The pastors of Jerusalem had a problem. As they listened to Paul's report, they knew they were entertaining a very controversial figure. Paul had been the object of their scorn and contempt in their sermons. They were anti-grace and he was the apostle of grace, therefore they attacked Paul from their pulpits. They now focus their attention on getting Paul into legalism.

Thousands of Jews were under the Law rather than the filling of the Spirit and the grace of God. They were ignorant of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age. These pastors have been maligning Paul personally, and their goal is for Paul to join them in their legalism, and sadly enough, he is actually going to do it. Again, we read in Act 21:21, "*And they have been told about you.*" The verb "told" is the aorist passive indicative form of *katecheo*, which is *katechetesan*, meaning to have something firmly taught, to be indoctrinated, and to be instructed, and it even means to roar. They roared against the Apostle Paul and his teaching of grace. They discredited the grace teacher because they did not understand grace. "...*That you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses...*" The word "forsake" is *apostasian*, the origin of the English word "apostasy." Paul was not using the Law as a way of life. The Mosaic Law was given to Jews in the Old Testament as a way of life; however, it is not a way of life for the Church-age believer. This is what they accuse Paul of teaching in Act 21:21, "...*telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.*"

Paul should have now given a dissertation on grace, but he is already out of the geographical will of God. Once you're out of the geographical will of God, it will be just a matter of time before you're out of the viewpoint will of God (what God wants you to think), and then the operational will of God (what God wants you to do). When a believer is out of the geographical will of God, it is shocking to observe his volitional decisions. Notice what they say next to Paul, Act 21:22-24, "*What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Therefore do this that we tell you. [They are ordering Paul to do this; this is not a request or a suggestion.] We have four men who are under a vow; take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.*" The advice of these pastors in Jerusalem is both dishonest and blasphemous, and Paul should have avoided these pastors and avoided the Temple in Jerusalem. There comes a time when we should not be around certain types of people.

Paul was warned three times to stay away from the city, and he refused the warnings. When a believer allows his emotions and feelings to rule, he refuses good advice and takes bad advice. Paul refused the good advice to stay out of Jerusalem, and he took the bad advice to go into the Temple and offer the vow. This is the reason he will go to prison for four years. He came to Jerusalem outside the geographical will of God. When he enters the Temple to make a vow, he will be out of the operational will of God. God never authorizes any believers to compromise doctrine by offering vows; they are simply an act of legalism. For Paul to take a vow is to renounce everything that he has been teaching about the grace of God.

"*Take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads...*" The word "purify" is the aorist passive imperative form of the verb *hagnizo*, which means to receive purification or to make oneself clean. When they went into the Temple, they would declare their intention to take a vow and meet certain conditions. First of all, they had to let their hair grow until their vow was over. Secondly, they had to go on a certain diet, a semi-fasting or ascetic diet. Thirdly, they had to come up with a large financial offering within 30 days. This is why they made their vow public, hoping that some rich man with a guilt complex would pay their expenses. This purification system included the Nazarite vow of Num 6:1-8. Paul must let his hair grow, abstain from all wine and good foods, and become an ascetic. At the end of the 30 days, he is to present himself in

the Temple with his money, followed by the shaving of his hair and burning it on the altar. In effect, they were telling Paul that after this vow, the Jerusalem pastors and the thousands of legalistic Christians would finally accept him. The pastors at Jerusalem figure that Paul can afford the expense for these four men. So they say in Act 21:24, *"Take them and receive purification yourself along with them."* This great man of grace fell for this because of sentimentality and emotionalism. Every blessing Paul ever had, he received from doctrine and grace, and now they want him to try to earn his blessings by making a vow.

What was Paul's motivation in all of this? It was his emotional attachment to Judaism. It has been said that one never separates entirely from his background, and Paul's background was Phariseeism. Paul also failed to apply doctrine to the situation; he knew the doctrine but failed to apply it, as in Jam 4:17, *"Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin."* Paul failed to apply doctrine because he was too emotional. When people become too emotionally involved with their problems, they fail to apply doctrine at the right time. Paul forgot that love must be directed toward doctrine first and not toward people first. Paul loved those at Jerusalem, but they did not love him. Paul got loyalty and love confused. His love for doctrine should not have been compromised by his love for people. Since doctrine was the issue here and not love, Paul should have followed his own advice of Gal 5:1, *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."*

COMPASSION

James 2:13-18

11/07/04

The main passage in our current study is Phi 4:10, "Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your concern or thinking for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity." The word "concern" is the present active infinitive form of the Greek verb *phroneo*, meaning to care or be concerned about others with objective thinking, or to be compassionate and caring for others. This was the attitude of those believers in the Philippian church, even though Paul had made a great mistake in Jerusalem. A believer can serve God faithfully for years, and then difficulties begin to wear him down, and he begins to stumble and struggle. Then someone motivated by the love of God and compassion begins to minister to him, and the grace of God becomes more real to him as he finally sees the eternal purpose behind each situation in his life.

Paul recognizes the grace of God being manifested through the compassion and caring of born-again believers. He discovered victory in his situation, and it was someone else's tenderness and compassion that made the difference. He wrote in Gal 6:2, "*Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.*" Paul rejoiced to see individuals applying what they learned; in fact, this is such an important function that God the Holy Spirit has specifically given some believers certain spiritual gifts for this purpose, called exhortation and mercy, Rom 12:8, "*He who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*" He comforts us when we go through hard times, and He brings us to others who are going through hard times, so that we can be there for them, just as God was there for us, 2Co 1:3-6.

We will have plenty of hard times that come from following the Lord, but no more so than the good times of His abundant comfort. When we go through suffering because of our relationship with God, as Paul did, it works out for the comfort and deliverance for others, 2Co 4:12, "*So death works in us, but life in you.*" Paul was in prison because of his compromise of grace and doctrine, but he was still God's child. Death was working in him so life and deliverance could work in us, as he wrote the four prison epistles. Those who reveal His grace and compassion have a special place in the heart of God.

Jam 2:13 states, "*For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.*" Mercy rules over judgment; it takes total precedence. The word for "triumphs" is the present active indicative form of the Greek word *katakauchaomai*, which means that mercy holds a more excellent position than judgment. Mercy reigned in our Lord's heart in Luk 19:41-42, when He looked down at Jerusalem and wept. He understood that His destiny was the Cross of Calvary. He knew rejection would be His destiny, but still He intensely desired to reveal His mercy. God delights in forgiving, edifying, and reconciling. He finds great joy in mending broken hearts and minds, and is pleased to minister mercy and compassion to the sinner who brings his need before Him, as in Luk 18:9-14. Spirituality is not measured by how well someone exposes another in his sin, but by how well he restores his fellow believer, Gal 6:1-2.

When the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, makes the compassion and mercy of God real to a Christian, he will not be passive, but will exercise mercy, understanding that he himself could be overtaken in fault at any time. We tend to promote intellect, knowing how to solve problems and identify an advantage and seize it, but the functions of intellect are insufficient without courage, love, friendship, compassion, and empathy. There should be a passion for compassion among the Royal Family of God, Act 20:33-35.

Our Lord served His generation during His stay on earth, in Mat 9:36-38, "*And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore*

beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.” In Mat 14:14, *“When He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.”* The compassion of God cannot deny those who are in need. If you wish to serve your generation, you need to have the mind of Christ, and the mind of Christ is compassionate.

The Doctrine of Compassion

Point 1: Definition. Compassion is defined as a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another’s suffering or misfortune, accompanied by a desire to alleviate the pain and remove its cause. It is a sympathetic consciousness of others and their distress, with a desire to remove or help correct their situation. Compassion also means to handle tenderly and lovingly, to be merciful, to show pity, and to be gentle of the mind. It is overt graciousness because of a gracious system of thinking in the soul.

There are three categories of compassion—(1) genuine compassion, (2) pseudo-compassion, and (3) misuse of compassion. In the downfall of every client nation to God, pseudo-compassion and the misuse of compassion are involved. All three categories of compassion are operational in both believers and unbelievers. Therefore, compassion is not a Christian virtue; it is even found in unbelievers, as in Exo 2:6 when Pharaoh’s daughter had compassion on the baby Moses. Compassion is not a Christian virtue, though Christians with virtue will have compassion.

Point 2: The Lord is compassionate toward His people and expects them to be compassionate toward others, 1Ki 8:50. We have all experienced the compassion of God toward us, and we are to share that same compassion with others around us. There is no place for revenge or rejoicing when we see our enemies fall. Your attitude of compassion should always aspire to an unbeliever becoming saved and a believer restored to fellowship.

Point 3: The Lord sends messengers to warn, reprove, correct, and rebuke His people because He has compassion, 2Ch 36:15, Mat 9:36-38. In compassion, the Lord will send doctrine to those who desire it, even when there is a famine in the land, not a famine of food but of the Word of God, Amo 8:11. In His compassion, the Lord will find a way to get doctrine to those who desire it, in spite of all satanic opposition and false doctrine, 2Co 13:8.

Point 4: Because of compassion God forgives sin, Psa 78:32-39. In 2Sa 12:1-7 the prophet Nathan went to see King David and described an event that made David very upset: *“Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said, ‘There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.’ Then David’s anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, ‘As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. [David now pronounces a judgment on the rich man, which is actually a judgment on himself.] And he must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.”* [David is disciplined by God because he passed judgment on someone who had done the very same thing that he had done. David is the one who has no compassion. He wants the Lord to be compassionate toward him, but he was not compassionate toward others.] *Nathan then said to David, ‘You are the man!’*

At this time, David is very arrogant, and arrogant people do not exercise compassion for others. David has been in reversionism for over a year and has not even come outside the castle for air. He has become psychotic through his preoccupation with himself, and there is no lower point in life. David has become a psychopath, a mentally ill and unstable person, manifested by his lack of care for others. He has become neurotic, with emotional disorders affecting his personality and producing anxiety, guilt, and fear. He has also become a sociopath; he is antisocial and can no longer function

around people properly. God is very gracious and compassionate and He could have let David stay in the castle and die in his sins. However, He is sending a man of God to reach out to David.

- David = the rich man.
- The poor man = Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba.
- A great many flocks and herds" = David's wives and mistresses.
- "The one little ewe lamb" = Bathsheba.

This is a very simple story, and because David is so arrogant and self-righteous, he needs a very simple parable to reach whatever is left of his integrity. This is teaching by "finesse," designed to cause David to judge himself. David has fallen into transference arrogance, assigning his own flaws to someone else. Instead of teaching on the doctrine of arrogance, Nathan tells David a story, and when David reacts to what he hears, he does not realize that he is judging himself, which is necessary to recover from his arrogance.

How can a man enter into sexual arrogance, rape a woman, get her husband drunk, and murder her husband, and still be self-righteous? The answer is very simple: Arrogance. Self-righteous arrogance is quickly aroused to anger against others. So David said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die." Who is saying this? A man who has not been compassionate and caring for others. David pronounces his judgment, "And he must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion." This was according to the Law in Exo 22:1. And David is going to pay fourfold for his act.

1. The son of David's adultery with Bathsheba will die in 2Sa 12:14-19. Bathsheba's firstborn from David will die in place of David, an illustration of the substitutionary atonement.
2. Amnon, David's elder son by Ahinoam, will follow his father's rape of Bathsheba by raping his half-sister Tamar, David's daughter by Maacah, 2Sa 13:14.
3. Tamar is the sister of Absalom, and in 2Sa 13, Absalom murders his half-brother Amnon, following David's murder of Uriah.
4. The Absalom revolution (2Sa 15-18) will be the discipline for David's rebellion against God.

This is one of the most effective messages David has ever heard, and it forces him to look at himself objectively. God had appointed David king of Israel in his supergrace blessing. However, David's capacity for this promotion was destroyed, not by lack of doctrine, but by arrogance. The Lord reminds David of all that He has done for him. This is something for us all to remember that the next time we fail to be compassionate. Remember all the times that God showed Himself to be a God of compassion (Neh 9:19,28,31; Psa 23:6, 51:1; Psa 136; Lam 3:22-23; Mat 9:13; Col 3:12-13).

Compassion is not emotion, it is a sympathetic consciousness of others and their distress, with a desire to help; it is an aspect of humility that causes one to be aware of the needs, sensitivities, and problems of other people. Compassion, which is grace-oriented objectivity, is actually in direct contrast to arrogance, which is self-centered and self-righteous subjectivity.

Point 6: Compassion serves as a motivation for divine good.

- Compassion serves as a motivation for healing to take place in the lives of others, Mat 14:13-14, Luk 15:20. Before the prodigal son came back to the father, the father saw him slowly but surely coming back and ran out to meet him.
- Compassion motivated our Lord to help take care of the logistical needs of others, Mat 15:32.
- Compassion motivates identification with those who have lost loved ones, Luk 7:13.
- Compassion motivates forgiveness toward others, Mat 18:27.
- Compassion motivates the believer to perform divine good, Luk 10:30-37.

The Lord Jesus Christ illustrated compassion perfectly while on this earth, in fact, He even had compassion on the ignorant in Heb 5:2. Peter instructs us in 1Pe 3:8, "*To sum up, let all be harmonious, compassionate, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit.*" The Lord says in Zec 7:9, "*Dispense true justice, and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother.*" We have another valuable lesson in

Exo 33:18-19, *"Then Moses said, 'I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!' And He said, 'I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.'"* Graciousness and compassion are the highest expression of the glory of God. When there's absolutely nothing you can do about a situation, and all your strength is gone, make room for divine compassion, Deu 32:36, Psa 103:1-4.

Why does the Lord treat us with compassion? Look at Psa 103:13-14, *"Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust."* Notice the importance of respect for the Lord, and remember that to respect the Lord you must respect Bible doctrine, for Bible doctrine is the thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ, Psa 119:77, *"May Thy compassion come to me that I may live, For Thy law is my delight."*

The Bible teaches that the Lord is waiting to be compassionate toward us; Isa 30:18, *"Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him."* Our attitude even toward the wicked and unrighteous must be one of compassion, Isa 55:7, *"Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."* Even if a person is under divine discipline, the divine attitude is one of restoration and compassion, Lam 3:32, *"For if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness."*

The Lord has not called you to give up things and sacrifice for Him; He has called you to grow in His grace and knowledge and be gracious and compassionate toward others, Mat 9:13. Legalistic and self-righteous individuals lack compassion and therefore always condemn others, Mat 12:7, *"But if you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent."*

Point 7: Pseudo-compassion.

- Pseudo-compassion is a means used by the arrogant to manipulate other people. Those who have power lust will use pseudo-compassion as a system of propaganda and manipulation, causing others to feel guilty and make irrational decisions under emotional sinning.
- It is a system of manipulation through the use of conspiracy to incite revolution.
- It is a system of manipulation through the function of human good in activism.
- It is a system of manipulation through the use of guilt as a weapon of manipulation in socialism.
- It is a system of manipulation in political power to achieve political objectives contrary to the principles of freedom.
- It is dishonesty and hypocrisy and something that all of us must learn to deal with. People are going to say things to you that they have no intention of fulfilling. Promises are no greater than the integrity of the one who makes them.

Pseudo-compassion results in the misuse of compassion. The victims of pseudo-compassion and those on a guilt trip are sucked into the propaganda of the conspirator and con-artist, as in 2Sa 15:1-6.

Pseudo-compassion is characterized by flattery, which the hypocrite uses to give others the impression that he cares. James made a statement about this kind of heartless religion in Jam 2:15-18, *"If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, 'You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.'" If we truly love God, we will open our hearts and show love toward others, 1Jo 3:16-18, "We*

know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA, PART 3

The 2004 California Conference

Revelation 2:18-29

11/14/04

The book of *Revelation* is the textbook of world history from A.D. 96 to the end of time, and the Bible says more about this period of time than it does about any other period of time in all of human history, including the time our Lord walked upon the face of this earth. In Rev 1 we have the principle of who and what Jesus Christ is, and the doctrine of historical trends and how Jesus Christ controls history.

Rev 2-3 deals with the dispensation of the Church-age, which takes place between the two greatest prophecies in history—the First Advent of Christ and the Rapture, in which He meets us in the clouds of the air. Both events terminate with a resurrection—the First Advent with the resurrection of Christ, and the Rapture with the resurrection of the Church. These two chapters contain messages to seven different churches, which portray seven historical stages for the Church, as well as seven different types of churches or individual believers that can be seen in every generation.

At our latest conference, we continued with our study of Rev 2:18, *“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira...”* The type of believer found at Thyatira is the one who tolerates false doctrine and false teaching, even though he has love, faith, service, and perseverance, Rev 2:18-25. The dissertation to the church at Thyatira is one of the longest to the seven churches, yet one of the most rewarding. The corrected translation of Rev 2:18 reads, *“And to the messenger of the church in Thyatira [also applies to the future pastor-teachers at Thyatira and to the future pastor-teachers of the Thyatira-type believers in the Church-age] write [communicate]: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this...”*

Thyatira was the world’s center for the worship of the sun god Apollo and was also famous for its labor unions. It was the most completely unionized city in the Roman world, and the unions sponsored the phallic cult. The Phallic cult was based on sexual immorality, as in 2Co 12:21; Eph 3:5,4:19,5:5; Rev 2:14,20-23. This type of reversionism is also related to demonism, therefore, forbidden by God in Exo 20:3,23, 23:24; Deu 4:28, 5:7, 6:14, 7:16, 8:19. No nation ever survives the spread of the phallic cult and the influence of excessive sexual perversion. In Thyatira, there were many believers coming under the influence of the cults and idol worship. In Thyatira, the unions (representing business or occupation) and the cults (representing idol worship or putting other things before God) destroyed their spiritual life.

Rev 2:19 continues, *“I know your deeds [accomplishments, Christian production], namely the virtue-love [the functional virtue of impersonal love], and the faith [the operation of the three stages of the faith-rest drill], and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.”* Even though these believers were growing spiritually and had made consistent positive decisions, the Lord Jesus Christ gives them a warning against falling away from God through idol worship and inordinate attachment or extreme devotion to anything else besides God, Rev 2:20, *“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”*

Much of the demonic activity was channeled through an attractive, charming woman who impressed many of the believers at Thyatira. She was known by the name of Jezebel, although it was actually her title. She is the first great instigator of persecution against the saints of God in the Church-age, just as the Jezebel of the Old Testament persecuted God’s people. She represents all the distractions that the opposite sex and false religion can bring to believers who desire to execute the predesigned plan of God and fulfill their personal sense of destiny. Her idolatry was of the most

depraved and sensual kind, she was known for making men a real puppet in her hands, and her conduct was disastrous for the believers in Thyatira. She drove many of God's people from the plan of God, just as the Jezebel of the Old Testament in 1Ki 19. She was an arrogant, ambitious woman, and dangerous because she had beauty and brains. There is nothing wrong with being smart and beautiful, but in Rev 2:20, she claims to be a "*prophetis*"—a prophetess, or an inspired woman. The question is not whether or not she is inspired, but by whom!

"So that they commit acts of immorality [fornication] and eat things sacrificed to idols..." To eat food sacrificed to idols has to do with the function of the phallic cult, and this reminds us we must be very wary concerning those with whom we have a social life, as they often have the greatest influence on your life. The first priority in our life must be our relationship with God, which can only be fulfilled through the daily perception and application of doctrine.

Rev 2:21-22 continues, *"And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. [Jezebel of Thyatira appears to be a believer, because she is given time to repent of her fornication.] Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds."* Here we see divine discipline upon believers in Thyatira. God is a God of love, and He will not stand by while members of His Royal Family sink into degeneracy. He will take stern measures to alert them to their critical situation and to encourage them to rebound and re-enter His plan. In His perfect wisdom, God knows when and how to warn each believer, and all divine discipline is administered in grace. The Christian under discipline may doubt that God is treating him in grace, but he could not imagine how much more he would hurt if God were not acting in grace, Job 5:17, Psa 119:65-67. Under disastrous conditions, God can and does produce good out of suffering; God is perfect and His plan is perfect (Deu 32:4), and when a believer enters into His plan, all things will work together for good.

God in wisdom deals with us perfectly as only He can. He allows the things and the people of the world to afflict us to bring us back to Him. Many times our trials and afflictions are thorns and a hedge to keep us on the right path. Many people will only learn when they are under adverse circumstances. As the potter, God knows just how to mold and chisel us for the best. There are three stages of discipline:

1. Warning discipline, Rev 3:20, Jam 5:9—light discipline that can be removed by rebound and recovery.
2. Intensive discipline, Psa 38:1-14, in which a person may lose his health or end up in strong delusion as King David did. Some of the effects are as follows: (1) loss of health, restlessness, and sleeplessness, Psa 38:3; (2) depression, Psa 38:4; (3) crying for no reason, Psa 38:6; (4) breakdown in the nervous system, Psa 38:7; (4) screaming and hollering, Psa 38:8; (5) trouble with the cardiovascular system, Psa 38:10; (6) in addition to lack of fellowship with God, no fellowship with other people, Psa 38:11; (7) alienation from family members, Psa 38:11; (8) attacks from enemies, whom God has allowed to come forth, Psa 38:12; (9) giving up and quitting, Psa 38:13.
3. Dying discipline, 1Jo 5:16, when God takes the believer home early.

"Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds." Jezebel was given time, and time is what all have in common as believers. Long before we are hit with divine discipline, we make our own bed of misery. We are the products of our own decisions, individually as well as collectively. We only intensify the results of our wrong decisions by blaming others. God has assigned to you a number of days to live on this earth, Psa 90:12. We are not given years or months to live; according to the Bible we are given days. God has given us an assignment, namely to fulfill our personal sense of destiny, and a certain amount of time to fulfill this destiny. Every day we must be learning doctrine and preparing ourselves to bring glory to God. If we do not purchase time by taking in doctrine consistently, we lose days,

because days of life are lost through divine discipline. The resistance or rejection of Bible doctrine on any given day, and preoccupation with yourself and your problems, results in double-mindedness; this means indifference or reaction toward doctrinal teaching, the frantic search for happiness, and “operation boomerang” (reaping the consequences of your own negative volition).

“And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.” “Repent” is the Greek verb *metanoeo* (*meta* means change; *noeo* means thinking). Jezebel had a great deal to confess to the Lord—her arrogance, jealousy, vindictiveness, implacability, gossip, maligning, and lying. She told many lies every day in her false doctrine as the high priestess of the phallic cult in Thyatira. But it was not her desire to rebound. She enjoyed being the head of a great phallic system and holding the place of power. She enjoyed all the fun she was having. She enjoyed witnessing for the kingdom of darkness, even though she likely did not realize she was doing so. Therefore, God is going to give her something that will finally get her attention.

In Rev 2:22 we see divine discipline, the alternative to rebound: *“Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness...”* This woman represents emotional leadership in Thyatira, and the people who are doing the most complaining, maligning, and judging of others are those who are the most unhappy; therefore, they want to punish someone else. All of this is a terrible system of self-induced misery, with negative decisions adding up until those involved find themselves dying the sin unto death. The word “behold” is the Greek demonstrative particle *idou*, which is best translated, “now hear this.” Jezebel and her cult are going to be dealt with by the Supreme Court of Heaven.

“Behold [now hear this], I will cast her upon a bed of sickness.” Jezebel of Thyatira was accustomed to getting into bed for fun; however, this is not fun anymore. The world’s way of having fun eventually turns into the most intense type of misery, and none of us can get away with sin for pleasure.

- Since the bed is associated with fornication, and also with illness, it is used to describe the nature of Jezebel’s discipline from the Lord Jesus Christ. She is reaping what she sows.
- Jezebel, from her own free will, chose a bed of fornication (so-called fun and pleasure), therefore, our Lord chose for her punishment a bed of illness and decay.
- Promiscuity and an undisciplined life result in total frustration and unhappiness, as well as divine discipline. People engage in illegitimate sex because they think it will make them happy, but seeking pleasure apart from the Word of God only brings misery. Capacity for happiness must precede the function of happiness. Capacity is the issue. No one has ever attained the happiness they sought through fornication because the road to happiness goes through the Word of God, not through the bedroom of the Jezebel’s of life.
- We, as believers, are the products of our own decisions; likewise, Jezebel of Thyatira as a believer was the product of her own decisions. She chose fornication, and thereby chose for herself a life of frustration and unhappiness.
- She was seeking pleasure, but she found self-induced misery and divine punishment—the bed of illness and disease.
- God designed sex as an expression of love between one man and one woman. He will not permit the distortion of sex into sin and evil, and Jezebel is going to receive maximum discipline.
- Illicit relationships offer a moment of pleasure and a lifetime of misery and unhappiness.
- Promiscuity is a distraction from the road of happiness. It is a dead end to what could otherwise be a wonderful life.
- God invented sex and invented happiness, and happiness can only exist inside the predesigned plan of God under God’s rules.

Again, in Rev 2:20-22, we have an indictment against the Thyatira-type believers: *“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to*

idols. And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds." The first principle here is that divine discipline is the only alternative to rebound, and Jezebel is refusing to rebound. The second is that her cosmic followers will also be disciplined. Far too many believers had followed her into this phallic cult. They thought it would be fine if they all got together and had a little "fun."

This is not just one act of adultery; this is an ongoing lifestyle culminating in evil and the practice of satanic religion. When a significant portion of a nation's population is condoning or practicing an undisciplined lifestyle such as fornication, social degeneration is the result. Suffering may be related to many factors, but there are two general categories—suffering for blessing and suffering for cursing (discipline). There is always a reason for suffering; it is not accidental.

In Rev 2:23, we see divine punishment and its historical trends: *"Furthermore, I will execute her children [students, followers] with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the emotions and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds [the reception of rewards or the loss of rewards]."* "Children" is the accusative plural direct object form of the noun teknon, which means students—the believers who have become involved in the cosmic system with Jezebel. The phrase "with pestilence" is the preposition en followed by the instrumental form of the noun thanatos, and should be translated "by means of death." Dying miserably is the way in which cosmic believers leave this life. Our Lord never makes a mistake in taking a Christian home early under the sin unto death. Our Lord is constantly evaluating every believer on the face of the earth. He tests the right lobe (the heart) where we think, and He tests the emotions, which should not control the soul, but rather respond to the right thinking. If the emotions are in control, it is a sign of cosmic involvement and reversionism.

The conclusion of our Lord's message to the Thyatira Christians is given in Rev 2:24-29, *"But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."* The Lord is now addressing those who are positive toward doctrine and are learning from the Apostle John. There was no pastor teaching doctrine in Thyatira, and therefore John would have to send letters every week with a doctrinal message. After issuing His warning, our faithful Lord, in His grace, offers some magnificent promises and words of encouragement to His children who are still faithful to His Word...including the greatest honor in eternity, the order of the morning star.

COMPASSION IS A RESULT OF RIGHT THINKING, NOT EMOTION

Philippians 4:10

11/21/04

So far our corrected translation of Phi 4:10 says, *Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your concern or thinking for me;*

The Greek word for *concern* is the present active infinitive from the verb *phroneo* which means to care or to be concerned about others with objective thinking, or to be compassionate and caring for others. This was the attitude of the believers in the Philippian church even though Paul had made a great mistake in Jerusalem.

The fact that they were thinking about him means two things.

1. They appreciated all the doctrine that Paul taught them. He evangelized many of them, and he taught them doctrine and they were remembering him in a very wonderful way simply because the original doctrine in their souls came from him. They appreciated doctrine so much, that he would be a pleasant memory to them throughout time and eternity. Every pastor will have to stand before God and give an account for what they taught members of their congregation, 1Pe 5:1-4, Jam 3:1, *Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment [evaluation at the Judgment Seat of Christ]. Col 1:28, And we proclaim Him, inculcating every believer and teaching every believer with all wisdom in order that we may present every person complete or mature in Christ.* So when someone is your right pastor and you learn doctrine from them, he is one person you will appreciate all your life. That appreciation goes with the fact that the right priority in your soul is doctrine and that is more important than anything in your life.

2. The people you love, you think about, just like the things that are most important to you, you think about. These things are then the number one priority in your soul.

Again Phi 4:10 says, *Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived.*

The phrase have revived is the aorist active indicative from the verb *anathallo* which is *anethalete*. *Ana* is a preposition meaning again, *thallo* is a verb meaning to flourish or to thrive. The word means to thrive again, grow again, recover activity, bloom again, to revive, here it is used of those whose condition and affairs are becoming more prosperous.

Paul is saying I am happy that you're again showing such strong concern for me. They have broken the maturity barrier and advanced to supergrace and at that point their capacity for love extended toward God in category one love, and toward the apostle Paul in category three love which is manifested by caring for friends. Remember the principle: Friends come and go, but a true friend sticks by you like family, *Pro 18:24*. This is true friendship and is a very rare thing to have and a hard thing to find. *Pro 17:17* says, *Friends love through all kinds of weather*, and, as the apostle learned, one way to tell who the real friends are is when you are faced with difficult times. *Job 6:14* tells us that a true friend will be gracious and kind to you when you're going through a difficult time. When you're prospering, everyone is your friend but, when you go through adversity, you will discover who your friends really are.

The Philippians have become very interested in the apostle Paul, they have revived their thinking concerning him. They have sent a large sum of money to carry Paul during his imprisonment because Paul is not in a littoral prison, a place like a dungeon with chains on him, rather he is living in his own apartment with a Roman guard watching him. Therefore it required a great deal of money,

and the money came from the Philippian congregation. Epaphroditus, the pastor of the Philippian church, is the bearer of the offering in Phi 2:25-30, *Now I consider it necessary to send face to face with you Epaphroditus, my brother also my fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister with reference to my need; because he was longing for all of you and was distressed because you had heard that he had become critically ill. For in fact, he was so critically ill that he nearly died, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, lest I should have sorrow stacked upon sorrow. Therefore I have sent him with special urgency in order that when you see him again you might have intensified happiness and I may be less concerned or less anxious about you. Receive him [Epaphroditus] therefore in the Lord with all inner happiness, also keep on holding men like him in highest honor. because on account of the business of Christ, He came close to dying, when he had gambled his life in order to make up for your lack of service to me.* All the spiritual advance of the Philippian congregation has come through three men, Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus, and these men, of course, have been right pastors in succession. This dramatizes the importance of the right pastor in the scheme of things during the dispensation of the church.

So again Phi 4:10, *Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your concern or thinking for me; indeed, you also were thinking about me* The prepositional phrase *Epi* plus the locative of the relative pronoun *hos* is a Greek idiom meaning indeed and then we have the conjunction *kai* meaning also so we have indeed also you were concerned. That means to be concerned here, because they knew of Paul's imprisonment and they assumed that he needed funds and the assumption was correct so the offering was very timely.

The particle *de* comes next and is translated *but* and is used to set up a contrast between a past concern with no opportunity to express it in contrast to now a present concern with the opportunity to express it. This is the difference between an impulsive giver and a generous person. An impulsive giver is a self-centered person calling attention to himself, he is often considered generous and wants everyone to think he's that way. A truly generous person lays back and waits for a need to arise in his periphery and then he steps in and take care of it, there's no impulse at all and that's the way the Philippians were, generous, but not impulsive givers.

Notice some principles that Paul taught upon this subject as he used the Philippian church as the visual aid.

1. Giving is an expression of the royal family honor code, Rom 15:26-27. Charity is from God; socialism and welfare are from man.
2. Giving is an expression of free will, without gimmicks, without coercion, 2Co 8:3. This was a reference to the Philippian church. 2Co 8:3, *For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord,* Their giving was a sign of their spiritual growth.
3. Giving is an expression of mental attitude in every circumstance of life. 2Co 8:1-2, *Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction [in the midst of severe testing and great pressure] the superabundance of their happiness and their deep poverty overflowed in rich generosity."* Even though under adversity, they shared the happiness of God and having that mental attitude, they gave even while in deep poverty.
4. Giving must express an attitude toward the Lord before it can express an attitude toward others. 2Co 8:5, *"And not even as we anticipated, but they gave first of themselves to the Lord, then they gave to us by the will of God."* They were occupied with Christ and had personal love for God the Father which motivated their giving.
5. Giving depends on the consistent perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine after salvation. 2Co 8:7, *But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this*

gracious work also. Just as they you excelled in everything in faith-rest and in doctrine and in knowledge and in all diligence and in virtue-love, they also excelled in grace giving.

6. Precedence for giving is derived from the dispensation of the hypostatic union and is predicated on grace. 2Co 8:9, *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich [eternal God], yet for your sake He became poor [true humanity], so that you through His poverty [being judged for our sins] might become rich."*
7. Giving is a mental attitude related to an overt act. 2Co 8:12, *"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable on the basis of what one has, not on the basis of what one does not have."* Willingness counts for giving, if you have nothing to give.
8. Giving is related to motivation from metabolized doctrine in the right lobe of the soul. 2Co 9:7, *"Each one, as he has determined in his right lobe, so give, not from distress of mind or under compulsion or pressure of emotions; for God loves a gracious giver."*
9. God in His matchless grace provides both the spiritual motivation and monetary capital for grace giving. 2Co 9:8, *"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that in always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have abundance for every good deed."*
10. God in His matchless grace provides both the monetary capital for grace giving and makes it part of your Christian service. 2Co 9:10, *"Now He who supplies seed for the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."*
11. Generosity of mental attitude results in generosity of giving. 2Co 9:11, *"You will be made rich in every way, so that you can be generous on every occasion; and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."* Giving is never a strain. When it says that you will be made rich in every way, it refers to the many blessings that we receive above and beyond just materialism. Gen 12:2, blessings of success, Gen 17:16, blessings of posterity, Deu 7:13, blessings in business, Deu 15:4, blessing of finances, Deu 23:20, blessing of land, Deu 28:12, blessing of prosperity, Deu 30:16, blessing of property, Psa 5:12, Blessing of divine protection, Psa 29:11, blessing of peace (inner peace), Psa 132:15, blessing of more blessing, Gen 49:25, blessing of sexual prosperity, Gen 24:35, blessing of silver and gold, 2Sa 6:11, blessing of entire household, Deu 29:5, blessing of divine character, 1Ki 3:13, blessing of riches and honor, Exo 23:25, blessing of health and no sickness, 1Ki 3:14, blessing of length of days, Deu 7:15, blessing of vengeance upon your enemies, Isa 41:10, blessing of strength. You will truly be wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing great praise to God.
12. Giving is a result of Christian service. 2Co 9:12, *"For this service which you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgivings to God."*

The Philippian church was generous, not impulsive and Paul had a need, they were not trying to gain Paul's attention or approbation. They simply expressed their love for Paul, their love for Bible doctrine, but more important their love of the Lord. They gave in exactly the right way; no strings of any kind were attached. This is the principle of the Royal Family honor code and the principle of reciprocity. Here is where gracious responsibility comes into the picture, Rom 15:26-27, *For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.*

The principle is that local churches have benefited spiritually from doctrine and are now motivated by that doctrine to give to the destitute Jews in Jerusalem. These Jewish believers have been persecuted because of doctrine. These Gentile believers recognize their debt of gratitude for the doctrine brought to them. God has prospered them financially; they sought to share their prosperity with those who had been the source of their prosperity. They were motivated by impersonal love to

do something for these other believers, even though many Jewish believers were still legalistic, apostate and often antagonistic. They responded to the motivation in their own soul, rather than the attitude of the object. The object of their grace attitude, courtesy, and gift was not important. The sharing of spiritual prosperity in doctrine motivates the sharing of material prosperity in money. This makes giving an honor code function with emphasis on motivation from doctrine in the soul.

The purpose of giving is a spiritual function of motivation, Christian giving is a matter of true worship of God. This is reciprocation between doctrinal teaching and resultant material prosperity. Because the mature believer has been spiritually blessed from doctrine and materially blessed through imputation to God's perfect righteousness resident in him, therefore he is motivated from doctrine to give to others. The function of the royal family honor code is to make issues clear that pertain to the economic survival of the local church, but it is not to make deals or beg for money. As a part of the royal family honor code, the Bible also teaches that the Pastor-teacher exchanges spiritual blessing to the congregation for material blessing from the congregation. This fulfills the principle of mutual blessing by association.

Giving reflects the mental attitude of the congregation toward their Pastor-teacher and establishes a partnership between the Pastor and the congregation. The congregation provides the financial contribution as they are spiritually blessed by the Pastor's teaching. Then the most important give of all is mentioned 2Co 9:15, *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!* Thank God for this gift, His gift, TLJC, No language can praise it enough!

Joh 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

So again Phi 4:10, *Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your concern or thinking for me; indeed, you also were thinking about me, but you lacked the opportunity to express it.*

Having compassion and being concerned has nothing to do with feelings or emotions, but with the thought content of the soul. This then has led us to the study of Feelings and Emotions:

Point 1 was our definition and description.

Emotion is part of the essence of the soul. Emotion has two functions in life as a part of the soul, a normal and an abnormal function. The emotions of the soul are designed to respond to what is in the mentality of the soul. The other parts of the soul include self-consciousness, volition, and the two frontal lobes, mind [nous], heart [kardia]. Emotion is the female part of the soul and is to respond to the right lobe, the male part of the soul. Category two-love (right man, right woman) illustrates the relationship between the emotion and the right lobe.

1Co 11:3, But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

1Co 11:7, For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

1Co 11:9, for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

1Co 11:11, However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

The divine order of the soul is that the emotion responds to the thoughts in the heart as the right woman is to respond to her right man. The right lobe [heart] possesses a frame of reference, designed for thought, the memory center, vocabulary and categorical storage, the conscience, the momentum department, the wisdom department, and the subconscious and also contains the norms and standards. Inside the right lobe of the soul is everything that should dominate emotion so that it become what it was designed to be by God; an appreciator and responder of things.

Eph 5:22-24, Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Eph 5:33, and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

Col 3:18, Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Eph 5:25, Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

Eph 5:28, So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

Eph 5:33, Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself;

Col 3:19, Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.

The heart contains all thought and standards while the emotion contains nothing. Koilia means the emotions something that is empty, or hollow. Emotion contains no doctrine, no thought, no common sense, and no ability to reason.

Phi 3:18-19, For many keep walking, concerning whom I have warned you many times, and now continue to affirm, even weeping, the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose termination is destruction, whose god is their [koilia] emotion, and whose time of glory will be a momentary time of shame, who keep thinking about earthly things.

Rom 16:17-18, Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own [koilia] appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

If emotion controls the soul you cannot think or apply doctrine to life. By definition, the emotions are the appreciator of the soul and by function, the emotions respond to the right lobe. Emotion is not designed to assume authority over the soul, but is designed to be dominated by the right lobe. Emotion has no ability to love but rather emotional revolt produces all forms of adultery, fornication, immorality, homosexuals and lesbians. Capacity for life is related to the right lobe, thought, not the emotions. While certain portions of the anatomy double for parts of the soul in the Bible, it is not difficult to distinguish the essence of the soul from the physiological anatomy of the body. Kardia is the heart, as the physiological anatomy of the body it refers to the area of thoughts in the soul. Anatomy in the languages of the ancient world always doubled for the functions of the soul, they did not have in ancient languages a psychological vocabulary. Only in the right lobe, the kardia, exists the frame of reference, memory center, viewpoint, norms and standards, and doctrine because.

Emotions are stimuli for action, and therefore must be regarded as a form of human energy. Positive response to the heart produces the spectrum of happiness, from tranquility, inner peace, to ecstasies in the emotions. Negative response to the heart produces the spectrum of misery: the back-up of mental attitude sins, revolt of the emotions, psychosis, instability of wide emotional swings, because the emotions take over control, become the aggressor, and dictate to the right lobe. When this happens, after awhile, the whole function of the soul is backed-up with mental attitude sins and emotions controlling every area of the soul: self-consciousness, mentality, volition, conscience. Since the emotions of the soul were never designed to dominate the soul, wide emotional swings demonstrate the inability of the emotions to dominate.

Emotional stress causes people to act on impulse. The emotion of fear (also a sin) causes flight. The emotion of disgust causes repulsion. The emotion of anger causes violence. Instincts are reflex behavior based on emotion rather than on thought. Emotion is a complex, biological, physiological process, or function concerned with somatic expression or feeling.

Two categorical functions of the emotions: the conscious sensations of the emotions of the soul, and the effects of emotions on the organic function of the body, especially the nervous system. The prefrontal lobes, the cortical areas of the brain, are associated with thought, motives, and decisions. Emotional activity can occur without the presence of thought. Emotion without thought is a tragic complication in life. When emotion functions without thought, that is abnormal emotional activity - emotional instability. Normal functions of the emotion include pleasure or entertainment, excitement, appreciation. The greatest enemy of Christianity is human good and emotion - the doctrine of pseudo spirituality.

THOUGHT VERSUS EMOTION

Romans 7:14-8:2

11/28/04

Philippians 4:10 Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your concern or thinking for me; indeed, you also were thinking about me, but you lacked the opportunity to express it.

The Greek verb for concern or care is *phroneo*, which does not have an emotional connotation; it connotes a *system of thinking* rather than feeling. This verb is used in the realm of thought in other passages such as Mat 16:23 (“your mind”), Act 28:22 (“your viewpoint”), Rom 12:3 (“your thoughts”), Rom 14:6 (“your observation”), Phi 3:15 (“your attitude”). It is important to note the difference between what you feel and what you think, especially since your feelings and emotions can deceive and misguide you. Compassion and concern have to do with the thought content of the soul, Col 3:12. All virtue come from the right lobe of the soul, where you do your thinking—not from your feelings.

Emotion is part of the essence of the soul, which resides in the brain. The emotions are designed to *respond* to what is in the mentality of the soul. But the way we feel is never the issue in the spiritual life. Emotion is the “female” part of the soul, designed to respond to the right lobe, the “male” part of the soul. Pro 14:30 says, *“A sound mind makes for a robust [vigorous] body, but runaway emotions corrode the bones.”*

In the divine order, the emotion is to respond to the thoughts in the heart, as the right woman is to respond to her right man. What is inside the right lobe of the soul should dominate emotion, so that emotion acts as an appreciator and responder, rather than reacting. Allowing one’s feelings and emotions to rule will result in disobedience and rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ.

While certain parts of the physical anatomy are used to represent parts of the soul in the Bible, it is not difficult to distinguish the essence of the soul from the physiological anatomy of the body. The Greek word *kardia* means “heart” and refers to the area of thoughts in the soul. In the *kardia* resides the frame of reference, memory center, viewpoint, norms and standards, and doctrine. None of these exist in the emotion, which is designed only to respond to these things. Emotions are stimuli and energy for action, and therefore must be regarded as a form of human power, Rom 8:5-8, *“For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*

Divine power and human power are mutually exclusive. The omnipotence of God is the spiritual energy for the spiritual life that God has provided. Our feelings must not dictate our spiritual life; we must rely on divine power and not the human power of emotion, Heb 12:3.

Most practices found in Christianity today are related to some system of human improvement and emotional stimulation rather than the omnipotence of God. There is great human power in personality, emotional appeals, various forms of human leadership, and physical appearance, but these things are not the power of God. God the Holy Spirit and Bible doctrine are the only energy whereby we are able to live a life that glorifies the Lord. If we are not led by the Spirit, we are functioning under a form of human energy, either emotion or arrogance. Now the Holy Spirit is “quenched” or “grieved” because we are not using His divine energy. Human power and emotion are a cheap substitute for divine power, and Christians get bored, weary, and frustrated when they try to live the spiritual life in human power. Many Christians live the Christian life under the human energy of emotionalism, which is pseudo-spirituality.

God uses prepared men and women for His work who are not governed by their emotions. If a teacher is not prepared, he will appeal to the emotions of the people. He will try to make them feel

good or feel spiritual or feel guilty. Christians involved in emotional movements function under the energy of the flesh in Satan's cosmic system. Human power includes emotional revolt, personality improvement, the works of the flesh, change of behavior pattern, spirituality by works, etc. Since the emotions of the soul are not capable of properly governing the soul, wide emotional swings occur in the believer. We saw this in the Garden of Eden, which was perfect, until the woman took over and dominated the man, and the Fall took place. Emotional stress causes people to act on impulse. The emotional sin of fear causes flight, the emotion of anger causes violence, and the emotion of lust causes immorality. If the way you feel becomes the criterion for your spiritual life, you will never be able to execute God's plan.

Emotion is a complex biological and physiological process and a function of somatic expression or feeling. There is a battle that goes on inside our soul, between what we feel and what we know is right, Gal 5:17. Many times the emotions within us are at odds with the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The emotions can become complex by tempting you to do things you do not desire to do. However, they can only *tempt* you; it is your volition that makes the choice to give in. Many times, when we give in to our emotions, we do those things that we regret, and this is the battle that Paul faced in Rom 7:14, *"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of [belonging to the realm of] the flesh [old sin nature], sold in bondage to sin [old sin nature]."* We were born slaves to the old sin nature, and the only time that we will ever be free from its slavery is when we perceive, metabolize, and apply Bible doctrine. Only truth can set us free, Joh 8:32.

Paul goes on in Rom 7:15, *"For that which I am doing, I do not understand [I do not know what I am doing—confusion caused when emotion tries to control the soul]; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very things that I hate."* We all have a legitimate desire to please the Lord, which increases as we increase our intake of doctrine. Paul is saying he has a desire to advance spiritually and please God, but these good intentions are hindered by emotions, Rom 7:16, *"But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do [let my emotions rule], I agree with the law [doctrine] that it is good."*

Doctrine enables us to recognize our flaws and the control our emotions have over us, and it reveals our total helplessness. The purpose of the law and the commandments was to reveal our helplessness and therefore our need for a Savior. Rom 7:17 continues, *"So now no longer am I the one doing it, but the sin nature which is indwelling me."* Paul has received the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is no longer the one alive, but Christ is living in him. Therefore when he sins, it is no longer him (the new man or new creature), but it is the old man (old sin nature). If God's people could only understand this basic principle, they would be free from slavery to their old sin nature and their emotions. Therefore, in Rom 7:18, Paul says, *"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh [sin nature], for the desire is present in me, but the doing of the good is not."* There are times when the sin nature controls the believer's will, and because the emotions are responders, they will also respond to the old sin nature, Rom 7:19-23, *"For the good of intrinsic value that I desire to do, I do not do, but I practice the very evil which I do not desire to do. [In his sin nature, he has discovered that it doesn't matter what he wills; inevitably he cannot do it.] But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish to do [and I am], I am no longer the one doing it, but the sin nature which dwells in me. I find then the principle, that evil is present with me, the one who desires to do the good [virtuous, noble]. For I joyfully concur with the Law of God with reference to my inner man [doctrine in the mentality]."* [This is a positive believer who now sees that doctrine has provided him with standards which now teach him.] *But I see a different Law [principle] in the members of my body, making war against the law of my mind [putting me in bondage], and making me a prisoner to the law of the sin nature which is in the members [cell structure] of my body."*

As you grow in the knowledge of doctrine, there can arise a tremendous conflict in the soul, not from the temptation of the old sin nature, but from the emotional revolt that can take place, Rom 7:24-25, *"I am a wretched [miserable] person! Who will rescue me from the body of this death [the old*

sin nature]? *Thanks be to God [grace belongs to God] through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, on the one hand, with my mind I am myself serving the law of God; but on the other hand, with my flesh [the old sin nature in control of the soul], I am serving the law of the sin nature.*" God in His grace knows we have inherent flaws and environmental handicaps, and that we face problems because we have allowed our emotion to be influenced by something evil. Therefore, Paul concludes in Rom 8:1-2, *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."* Even when our emotions can get the best of us, there is no ground for condemnation.

There are two categorical functions of the emotions—(1) the conscious sensations of the emotions of the soul, a mechanism of emotions in the brain, and (2) the effects of emotions on the organic function of the body, especially the nervous system, the effects of the transmission of too many or too few nerve impulses to the muscles of the body. The prefrontal lobes (the right and left lobes of the brain) are called the cortical areas of the brain, and are associated with thought, motives, and decisions. Normal emotions respond to these thoughts in the prefrontal lobes. However, emotion functioning without thought is abnormal emotional activity and emotional instability, and it comes and goes with great rapidity and unpredictability.

Normal functions of the emotion include pleasure, entertainment, excitement, and appreciation. These normal emotional functions must not be confused with the enabling ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Emotion is related to human power and influence, but never divine power and the mystery doctrine of the Church-age. When believers make emotion the criterion for their spiritual life, the following happens:

1. The believer makes a god out of his emotions, Phi 3:18ff. When emotion becomes your god, you are an easy target for religious deceptions such as the tongues movement.
2. The believer's emotional pattern distracts him from the execution of the predesigned plan of God, Rom 16:17-18.
3. Emotion hinders the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine, 2Co 6:11-12.
4. The believer's unrestrained and uncontrolled emotional pattern becomes the basis for criminality, violence, hatred, anger, and total involvement in the arrogance complex of sins (bitterness, vindictiveness, jealousy, implacability, self-pity, and guilt reaction). There is a very close relationship between the arrogance complex and emotion complex.
5. The believer's unrestrained, uncontrolled emotional pattern is related to the greatest problem of life—fear, as in Heb 2:14-15, *"Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."*

You can discover what your enemy fears most by observing the means he uses to frighten you. Satan fears death and uses it to put fear in us. Fear is a crippling emotion, and a fearful life is characteristic of the believer who is not yet fully matured in love, 1Jo 4:18. Abnormal emotional experience expresses itself in emotional sins, and becomes the motivation for violence, murder, gossiping, maligning, inordinate ambition, and the inordinate competition of running down other people in order to promote oneself. The sinful activity of anger, hatred, fear, worry, and anxiety promotes arrogance, and undermines the momentum of God's plan, purpose, and will for your life.

The basic emotional problem that we all have to deal with is the emotion of fear, and there are many scriptures that command us not to fear; therefore, fear is a sin, Rom 14:23b, Deu 31:6, Isa 41:10. Do not be concerned about the enemy because God is walking ahead of you, Deu 31:8, 2Ti 1:7.

Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart around us, on the inside, where God is working in our life, not a day goes by without His unfolding grace, 2Co 4:15-18. These

hard times are insignificant compared to the lavish celebration being prepared for us. There is far more here than meets the eye; the things we see now are here today and gone tomorrow, but the things we cannot see now will last forever.

Fear, worry, and anxiety are emotional sins and are a contradiction to God's plan for your life. No believer can fulfill God's will for his life as long as he is in a state of fear. The believer who consistently gives in to fear fails to glorify God, and loses out on fantastic blessings and rewards. Fear, of course, is a complex system of emotional sins, which includes worry and anxiety, and therefore failure to think under pressure. We are designed by God to be rational creatures, but fear makes us emotional and irrational. Fear carries with it a "snowballing" effect, and it will grow like cancer. When we surrender to one fear, many more fears will spring up. Fear is something that, if unchecked, will continue to develop in your life until you have no capacity for life, love, or happiness.

Fear is a key that unlocks many doors, starting with the door of arrogance. You cannot be afraid without putting an abnormal emphasis on yourself. Because of arrogance, you do not know who or what you are, for you cannot see your soul in the mirror of God's Word. You then begin to lose your personality identity, and fall into a total state of fear, retreating from reality and becoming psychopathic or neurotic. Only the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine can remove the fear, arrogance, and self-deception.

The predesigned plan of God is designed to remove all the cobwebs of fear in your soul and replace them with confidence in doctrine, which leads to confidence in the Lord. That is the only true basis for spiritual self-esteem, which is self-confidence through Bible doctrine. This inevitably produces the greatest courage in life—more than moral courage, it is a mental attitude courage in all relationships and in all circumstances of life. Every time fear enters your life, you must respond with the Bible doctrine in your soul, otherwise you are not living the Christian way of life. True courage means consistent sound judgment and thinking under pressure, which comes from Bible doctrine, not from emotion.

1Jo 4:18 teaches us a great lesson on fear: *"Fear does not exist in love, but mature love drives out fear; for fear causes punishment. In fact, the person who is afraid has not been matured by love."* If you have personal love for God the Father and you understand His integrity, you rest on the entire essence and person of God. You understand His integrity, and therefore you are dependent on Him. If we claim to be dependent on God and His integrity, then living in fear is an insult to God.

Our fear punishes us in two ways. First, we punish ourselves through self-induced misery. Then, when fear leads into arrogance, divine discipline follows. Our fear can bring on punishment from ourselves, our peers, and God Himself. Mature believers are not fearful or anxious, except for occasional brief periods of time. Mature believers will experience fear or anger if physically threatened (the natural fight-or-flight response); however, they are able to confront their perceptions that are causing their fear and make the necessary positive adjustments in their thinking; therefore, they do not get plagued with stress. Worry and fear do not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; they empty today of its strength. Nothing in life is to be feared; it is to be understood. The Church-age believer can never think doctrine, apply doctrine, or solve problems in fear.

THE ZOE LIFE

The Peace that Surpasses All Comprehension

Philippians 4:7-12, John 14:6

12/05/04

Philippians 4:11-12 Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

The verbs in this passage translated “have learned” (*manthano*) and “know” (*oida*) introduce our first subject—the importance of doctrine. The question is often asked, “Is doctrine a scriptural word?” The answer is Yes, very much so. The Greek noun *pistis* has several translations, including “doctrine,” “truth,” and “word.” The most important question of all is the one that Pontius Pilate asked in Joh 18:38, “*What is truth?*”

In Joh 14:6, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “*I am the way [entrance], and the truth [doctrine], and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*” The “way” refers to the entrance into the plan of God; the noun *hodos* is used for entrance into a systematic course of planning and action. The “truth” refers to what we learn after we enter the plan of God, and the “life” is the function of truth and doctrine. Everyone enters into the plan of God at exactly the same place, which means everyone has the same opportunity to glorify God. Everyone is born equal in salvation.

Many believers have some truth but not the accurate truth of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age, Act 18:24-26, “*Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*”

Hodos, the way, is used for entrance into the plan of God, a plan in which everything is provided and characterized by one word—grace. Everything depends upon who and what God is. The second principle the Lord mentions is what follows your entrance into the plan of God, and that is the truth, the Greek word *aletheia*. *Aletheia* refers doctrine taught categorically. The object of salvation and its ultimate end is to bring us to a knowledge of the truth, 1Ti 2:3-4. Our thinking must be based only on truth; too often we think in terms of feeling or experience, Joh 1:17, Joh 18:33-37. The Lord came into the world to bring us to a knowledge of the truth that He alone saves us, and saves us forever.

The whole purpose of truth is not to give us certain experiences and feelings, but to bring us to the knowledge of who God is! Experiences come and go, but if we do not have truth, experiences and feelings are false and misleading. Experiences can be real, but can come from the kingdom of darkness. To know God and come to the knowledge of the truth is the key to the fantastic life that is waiting for us in God’s plan.

1. In the Old Testament, the usual Hebrew word for “truth” is *emeth*, which means stability, certainty, trust, and that which is faithful, stable, and secure. The most commonly used Greek word for “truth” is *aletheia*, which means integrity of character, and that which is faithful and certain.
2. Truth has a price upon it, Pro 23:23, “*Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding.*” The price of truth is humility, commitment, dedication, and consistency.
3. Truth must be valued above money, riches and any form of prosperity, Psa 19:7-11,72,127; Pro 3:13-18, 8:10-11,17-19.

4. It is impossible to serve the Lord without truth as one's motivation, Jos 24:14, 1Sa 12:24, 1Ki 2:4.
5. It is truth that gives us guidance and direction to worship God properly, Psa 43:3, Joh 4:24.
6. Truth is something we must be taught; it does not come naturally, Psa 25:5, Joh 8:31-32, Isa 38:19, Mat 22:16, 1Ti 2:4.
7. Truth protects us and keeps us from deception, not simply Jesus Himself, but truth, which is the mind of Christ, 1Co 2:16, Phi 2:5, Joh 14:26. Truth preserves and protects us, Psa 61:7, and the Apostle Paul warns us that in the last days "truth" will be rejected and deception accepted, 2Th 2:7-12; 2Ti 3:5-8, 4:1-4.
8. Truth is that which God desires in our life, Psa 51:6. Truth is what will judge the believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ, 1Co 4:5, and the unbeliever at the Great White Throne Judgment, Joh 12:48.
9. In His love, God always reveals grace and mercy with His truth, 2Pe 3:18, Psa 85:10-11. None of us could ever face truth if it were not accompanied by grace. God's righteousness is completely satisfied when He sees His truth in operation in man. Lovingkindness and truth always go together, Psa 40:10-11, Joh 1:14.
10. Truth cleanses us from sin, Joh 15:3, 17:17; Pro 16:6.
11. Without truth it is impossible to worship God properly. Joh 4:23-24, 16:13-14; 2Ti 2:15.
12. Truth always prevails over the kingdom of darkness, Joh 8:42-45. Those who continually live in sin or are passive, lazy, and slothful despise the truth.

The most important thing after you enter the plan of God is Bible doctrine. God's Word is to be glorified. This truth leads to a lifestyle, Joh 14:6, *"I am the way [entrance], and the truth [doctrine], and the life."* The word "life" is the Greek noun *zoe*.

The Zoe Life

"Zoe" means the *function* of life, and the *zoe* life is a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, Phi 4:11-12, *"Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need."*

The "truth" of Joh 14:6 leads to the Christian lifestyle, and the objective of doctrine is to take the believer to the supergrace life. The *zoe* life is God's fantastic grace provision, which is far beyond your desires and even your most fervent prayers. You have never prayed for anything that even comes close to the *zoe* life, the life that God has devised for you. *Zoe* is God's fantastic grace provisions, which are far beyond anything for which you have ever asked God or others, Eph 3:20, *"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us."*

The Lord Jesus Christ said in Joh 10:10, *"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have [zoe] life, and might have it abundantly."* No matter how wild and seemingly impossible your dreams may be, God has provided something far greater than any imagination or dream you have ever had. The *zoe* life is the direct result of fulfilling the "life beyond *gnosis* (knowledge)"; it is one thing to know something, it is another to experience it. The life beyond *gnosis* of Eph 3:19 is the means of entering the *zoe* life of Eph 3:20. We read in Eph 3:14-21, *"For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge [knowledge], that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that*

we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

The life beyond *gnosis* is the means of executing the predesigned plan of God, and the *zoe* life is the result of executing the predesigned plan of God. In the *zoe* life, God does infinitely more than all we ask, whether the asking is toward God in prayer, or toward man by request. He does infinitely more than all we think or imagine, which is our personal desires, our expectations, and our thoughts associated with symbols of happiness.

Dreams can represent what we want to be, what we want to have, with whom we desire to associate, to what we want to be promoted, where we desire approval, and whom we desire to marry. Dreams carry us to the farthest extent of our imagination. For the Church-age believer, there is a *zoe* life that goes beyond anything for which we can ask. For every member of the body of Christ, there is a life beyond our dreams.

This is the life of Col 3:3, *"For you have died, and your [zoe] life has been hidden together with the Christ by means of the God."* This is the greatest life that has ever existed, and it is what God expects every believer to have. For this goal, God has made complete and total provision in the four spiritual skills—the filling of the Holy Spirit, metabolized doctrine circulating in the soul, the ten problem-solving devices, and the execution of the predesigned plan of God.

Dreams are often merely an escape from reality, but there is a reality of indescribable blessing in the *zoe* life. We do not even have the imagination to dream or the power to ask for the things which God has prepared for us in the *zoe* life, 1Co 2:9, *"However, as it stands written, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him."* The ways of God are way beyond our understanding, Isa 55:8-9. It is only in the *zoe* life that we begin to comprehend God's ways, and our worship and gratitude toward Him take on an entirely new meaning.

In the life beyond *gnosis*, the Church glorifies God through the attainment of spiritual maturity. In the *zoe* life, the Church glorifies God through receiving escrow blessings for time and eternity. A dangerous trap for all of us is to get discouraged in difficult times. We are given a peace and contentment that goes beyond understanding, Joh 14:27, *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful"*; Phi 4:7, *"In fact, that spiritual peace and prosperity from the source of the God, which surpasses or rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts, also your motivation and minds in Christ Jesus."* We do not always understand the will of God, but to trust His sovereignty completely leads us into the *zoe* life with its inner peace. As we stay dedicated and devoted to the Way, the Truth, and the Life, our outward problems caused by persecution, injustice, and even what we think is the unfairness of God, are no longer perceived as something negative that we should react to. The issue is, "His life or yours?"

"Zoe" is a life of contentment and inner peace as well as fantastic inner happiness, Phi 4:4, *"Keep on having perfect happiness by means of the Lord at all times."* It will free us from worry and give us inner peace, Phi 4:6-7. It will create in us a fantastic positive attitude toward life, Phi 4:8, *"From now on, members of the Royal Family of God, whatever is true [doctrinal], whatever is honorable [noble or worthy of respect], whatever is just [fair or right], whatever is pure [of proper motivation], whatever personal loves exist, whatever is commendable, if there is any virtue [and there is], and if anything worthy of praise [and there is], be concentrating on these things."*

1. This life is only found in Christ and gives us guidance and direction in this life, Joh 1:4, *"In Him was life, and the [zoe] life was the light of men."* Light gives us guidance, direction, and clarity. There is no confusion or boredom in the *zoe* life.
2. This life is made available to anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, Joh 3:15, *"That whoever believes may in Him have eternal [zoe] life."* This is life more abundant.

3. This life fulfills the desires found in every one of us, Joh 4:14, *“But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life”*; Psa 37:4, *“Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.”*
4. This life is made available to us in time, not beginning in eternity, Joh 5:24, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life [the zoe life from God], and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”*
5. This life is given to us through the intake of doctrine, Joh 6:27, *“Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life [zoe life], which the Son of man shall give to you, for on him the Father, even God, has set his seal”*; Joh 6:63, *“It is the Spirit who gives [zoe] life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”*
6. This life is given in measure depending upon the believer’s desire for it, Joh 10:10, *“The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”*
7. This life can never be taken away, Joh 10:28-30, *“And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”*
8. This life is described in Joh 17:3 as knowing God and His Son: *“And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”*
9. It is through the written communication of Bible doctrine that this life is offered to every member of the human race, Joh 20:31, *“But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing you may have [zoe] life in His name.”*

This life will allow us to be totally content in any and every circumstance of life, Phi 4:11-13. It will give us phenomenal confidence that no matter what the odds, God will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus, Phi 4:19. “Zoe life” refers to an extraordinary peace that God desires for us to experience in this life, to be delivered from the bondage of the world and the stronghold of the cosmic system. There is a place we can reach in our soul where we enjoy this indescribable life. To leave God’s will, after coming to this *zoe* life, would be the most miserable experience possible. The believer knows deep down inside that he will never derive any pleasure from exterior sources of the cosmic system. Everything else is meaningless and empty in comparison to a relationship with God and the experience of this *zoe* life.

This *zoe* life is a state in which the Christian who is resting in God does not need to be rescued from external problems and difficulties in order to remain happy and content. When you are faced with difficulties, remember this *zoe* life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, where we leave behind the old self-life for the new life in Christ. This is a life that is full of the fruit that God produces in our life, Gal 5:22-23, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”*

To live in Him who is our life is to live by the power of God, and includes these blessings that money cannot buy. This *zoe* life means that we are free from worry, anxiety, and frustration, and we have learned to remain confident. This *zoe* life, a life of complete inner happiness and contentment, is a state of mind in which there is total peace that cannot be taken away.

THE ZOE LIFE, PART 2

The Peace Which Surpasses All Understanding

John 14:6

12/12/04

Philippians 4:10-12 Now, I have received much inner happiness by means of the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your concern [thinking] for me; indeed, you also were thinking about me, but you lacked the opportunity to express it. [We now have the correct interpretation of history, and what it means to be on the right side of history and accept your calling and place in life.] Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

Through his faithfulness to Bible doctrine, Paul has learned a tremendous lesson—how to be content in all circumstances. We all need to be reminded how important Bible doctrine is, and understand what the Lord Jesus Christ meant when He said in Joh 14:6, “*I am the way [entrance], and the truth [doctrine], and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*” The “way” refers to the entrance into the plan of God; the “truth” refers to what we learn after we enter into the plan of God; the “life” is the function that comes out of that truth, or doctrine.

This is the life of Phi 4:11, “*Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.*” True contentment is a real, active virtue; it is the power of deriving as much as possible from any situation. A contented person can be happy with what appears to be useless.

There are two Greek words translated “life” in the New Testament; *zoe* (the origin of “zoology”) and *bios* (the origin of “biology”). *Zoe* means the function of life, and *bios* means the pattern of life. *Zoe* refers to the supergrace life, which is the objective of all the doctrine we learn. The *zoe* life is God’s fantastic grace provisions, which are far beyond even your most fervent prayers. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Joh 10:10, “*The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have [zoe] life, and might have it abundantly.*” Paul wrote in 1Co 2:9, “*However, as it stands written, ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.’*” No matter how wild and seemingly impossible your dreams may be, God has provided something far greater than any thinking or imagination you have ever had.

The *zoe*-life is the direct result of fulfilling the life beyond *gnosis* (knowledge); it is one thing to know something, it is another to *experience* it. This *zoe*-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, means we are free from worry, anxiety, and frustration. We “have learned” to remain confident; we have tranquility of soul, and we are being refreshed daily. It is a manifestation of the glory of God within us. When believers reveal the glory of God, there will be one basic characteristic and quality that follows them wherever they go—the *zoe*-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, which is alive in them. They are now have “life abundantly.”

In Gal 6:14-16, Paul wrote, “*But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, peace, and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.*” Paul was living in the new creature under the filling of the Spirit, but still desired to attain this *zoe*-life in time. The experience of this life in time is a reward for living the ultimate spiritual life.

A believer at any stage can live the spiritual life, using some or even all of the problem-solving devices. However, this *zoe*-life can be experienced as a reward only by those willing to live the spiritual life by sticking with the plan of God. God not only rewards those who diligently seek Him in

the eternal state, but He also rewards them in time, Heb 11:6, Mar 10:30. This may not necessarily be through materialism and overt prosperity, but through the experience of this zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment.

We can think like the Lord Jesus Christ and reach a state of total reward in our mental attitude from the fulfillment of the plan of God. We will still sin and fail, but will experience times when the peace of God is such a reality in our lives that our difficulties have no control over us. Paul put it this way in Gal 6:8, *“For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal [zoe] life.”*

The verb “to sow” is the present active participle form of the verb *speiro*, which means to sow, to invest one’s time, and to invest one’s life. If we keep on living the spiritual life, we will keep on reaping more and more of the experience of our eternal life in time, that is, the zoe-life. We see different manifestations of spiritual growth at spiritual self-esteem, spiritual autonomy, and spiritual maturity. It begins at spiritual self-esteem with characteristics such as the following:

1. Tranquility of soul. You begin to relax in your soul; in spite of the pressure on you, you have a relaxed mental attitude.
2. Stability of mental attitude. You do not feel threatened by others or fall into inordinate ambition and competition.
3. Composure marked by self-assurance, which is the correct and accurate application of doctrine to life.
4. Grace orientation to life, which includes mercy toward yourself when you fail and giving others the benefit of the doubt.
5. Doctrinal orientation to reality, which is based upon genuine humility, objectivity, teachability, spiritual common sense, and the avoidance of inordinate ambition and competition or inordinate self-esteem.
6. Good decisions from a position of strength, which includes motivation from personal love for God the Father and divine viewpoint thinking.
7. Personal control of your life.
8. A personal sense of destiny, which includes solving the problems related to God, self, others, and things.
9. Self-confidence from wisdom, which means the function of doctrinal purity or the application of metabolized doctrine to experience.
10. Poise. This is the believer under spiritual self-command.

All these characteristics improve and become stronger in the next stages of spiritual growth. When a believer reaches spiritual maturity, and goes on to supergrace and ultra-supergrace, then he will have the privilege of experiencing the zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment. Or Lord did not teach that if we believe in Him and then we die, then we will have eternal life—He prophesied that we could have this life now! He declared in Joh 5:24, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life”*; and in Joh 7:38-39, *“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”* As we walk in dependence upon the Spirit, He will cause this zoe-life to flow through us as rivers of living water.

The Holy Spirit may seem to be slow, and at times even inactive in our lives. But that is never the case; even when He is grieved or quenched, He is at work within us, Phi 2:13-14, *“For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you proper motivation] and to work [give you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure. Keep on doing all things without complaining,*

grumbling or arguing." If we only knew the magnitude of the desires of God for our lives, we would relax and enjoy every day, living one day at a time.

1Co 2:10-16 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. [Who knows what you're thinking and planning except you yourself?] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God [God offers us a full report on His gifts of life and salvation], which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. [There is no capacity in the natural man to know the zoe-life; it appears as silliness to him because he does not have the ability to understand it.] But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Those of us who are spiritually alive have access to everything God's Spirit is doing, and we cannot be judged by unspiritual critics. This zoe-life, the life of inner happiness, is rejected by the unbeliever, and most believers are also ignorant of it. We would not have any doubts or wonder about the power of the work of Holy Spirit in our lives if we knew the eternal heights of this zoe-life! It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul said in Rom 11:33, "*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*"

The Word of God transforms us, 2Co 3:17-18, "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." We are advancing from "glory to glory." As the Holy Spirit transforms us into the image of our Lord, giving us the opportunity to have this fantastic life in time, our self-perception continues to decrease, and we have a much greater perception of God in our lives. There will be less concentration upon self and more upon God and the real reason we have been created.

Only a few believers will, quietly and calmly, continue to seek after God in this manner, and be able to say with the Apostle Paul, "*I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.*" Usually they are believers who are hidden behind the scenes—humble, unnoticed, unrewarded, and expecting nothing, except that the Creator be blessed, and not the creature.

Before a believer can attain this contentment, the manifestations of experiencing this life in time, there comes an important revelation. We could call it an infusion of divine justice—the mature believer realizes that whatever the Lord does in his life, it is just. This believer is being prepared for something. He is being prepared to face what is before him without reservation and without any definite view in mind as to what the outcome will be. He accepts whatever God sees fit to do.

It is not difficult to identify the power of zoe-life; it is the power of love, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control, Gal 5:22-23. There is a difference experientially between believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and believing upon His Word to experience this zoe-life. Anyone who believes in Christ alone by faith alone is saved and will go to heaven and experience eternal life for all eternity, Act 16:31. Those who keep on believing on Him, by following His Word and applying it to their lives, will have the privilege of experiencing zoe life in time.

1. The zoe-life is only found in Christ and gives us guidance and direction in this life, Joh 1:4. There is no confusion or boredom in the zoe-life.
2. This life is made available to anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, Joh 3:15.
3. This life fulfills the desires found in all of us, Joh 4:14.
4. This life is made available to us in time, not beginning in eternity, Joh 5:24.
5. This life is given to us through the intake of doctrine, Joh 6:27.
6. This life is given in measure depending upon the believer's desire for it, Joh 10:10.
7. This life can never be taken away, Joh 10:28-30.
8. This life is described in Joh 17:3 as "knowing" God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
9. It is through the written communication of Bible doctrine that this life is offered to every member of the human race, Joh 20:31.

Before Paul died, he made a great statement in 1Ti 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." The key here is the verb "take hold," the aorist middle imperative form of the verb *epilambanomai*, which is *epilabou*. This verb means to take hold, to seize, to grasp, to obtain, to be concerned with, and to take interest in; here it means to take hold of what eternal life has to offer. This is to seize all the blessings and benefits associated with eternal life in time. We are to seize these things and do it now because the only time we can seize these things is in time. "Now" is your only chance to receive spiritual blessings, which means maximum awareness of the zoe-life, in which you savor every moment of life, whether in adversity or prosperity. You have zest for life and an enjoyment of every moment of life, regardless of what it brings.

As long as you are on this earth as a believer, you have the *opportunity* of receiving all that God has offered to you as a part of your eternal life. However, this cannot happen when you reject or neglect doctrine. The fantastic decorations and blessings that the believer will receive for becoming a winner in time are beyond human description and comprehension. Running the race set before you is the road to being a winner in eternity.

THE DOCTRINE OF CONTENTMENT

Philippians 4:11

12/19/04

We have been noting the result of living in a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, or what TLJC called the way, the truth and having the life that God has designed for you to have, Phi 4:11-12; *Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.*

Before a believer can attain that which Paul will teach us in Phi 4, the manifestations of experiencing this zoe-life in time, a very important revelation occurs; infusion of divine justice. This is where the mature believer realizes that whatever the Lord does, it is just. He truly believes Deu 32:4, *"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."* He understands that he is being prepared for something and he has the ability *to be content in whatever circumstances he finds himself in.*

It is living in this ability, this zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, is what truly brings glory to God in the midst of the angelic conflict because we still have a free will and must make a choice as to how we will *respond* to these principles. The apostle Paul said this regarding the zoe-life in 1Ti 6:12, *Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* The key here is the Greek verb *epilabou*, translated take hold. This is not telling believers to get eternal life since they already have it but rather this verb means to take hold, seize, grasp, obtain, be concerned with, take interest in what eternal life has to offer and all these meanings are applicable. Therefore seize; take hold of the eternal life, the zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, to which you were called.

Believers are to seize these things now because the *only time* we can seize these things is *in time*. In the eternal state God does all the work. 1Co 13:12, *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.* Right now we know the truth in part, imperfectly, but we shall know and understand fully and clearly, even in the same manner as we have been fully and clearly known and understood by God.

The zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, means that you are very much alive and that you cherish every moment of life, whether in adversity or prosperity. In the zoe life, you have zest for life and an enjoyment of every moment of life, regardless of what it brings, and this zest for life excludes being depressed or upset by the ups and downs of life. Paul is telling us to seize these things and do it now because the only time you can seize these things is in time. This is why Paul said on his dying bed in 2Ti 4:6-8, *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering [he knew he was facing death and his life was being poured out], and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.* Remember Co 9:24, *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.* You must run now!

As long as you're on this earth as a believer, you have the opportunity of getting all that God has offered to you as a part of your eternal life and remember this cannot happen when you reject doctrine or neglect doctrine. The fantastic decorations and blessings that the believer will receive for becoming a winner believer in time are beyond human description and comprehension. Becoming a winner in time and running the race set before you is the road to being a winner in eternity and in between we have dying grace, the golden bridge to eternity. For everyone who receives blessings in

time, there's going to be hundreds of thousands of people who do not because they rejected or ignored doctrine. Let's notice some principles concerning the zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment.

1. These are times that the zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, is being cultivated within us as we are identified with our Lord's sufferings.
2. Many times what is hard to suffer is sweet to remember. You don't develop courage and fortitude by being happy in your relationships everyday, you develop it by surviving difficult times and challenging adversity and being content in whatever state you're in.
3. In this dispensation, it is not deliverance from trials, adversities and problems that are the issue, but the superior power that God gives to us to endure these things. One often learns more from ten days of agony than from ten years of contentment.
4. The path of least resistance is the path of the loser, have the attitude of Est 4:16c *"and if I perish, I perish."*
5. It is not the power *for* you that counts, but it is the power within you that counts, Eph 3:20, 2Co 4:7.
6. You will never know your own strength until you are faced with adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to live in the zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment.
7. We can grow spiritually in all of our difficulties, Rom 5:3-4, 1Pe 1:6.
8. When trials, difficulties, sorrows, or weaknesses come our way, the thing to consider is the grace and the power to be above them all through the experience of the zoe life. It is in those dark times, that the eyes begin to see. Adversity is the perfect glass where we can truly see our own reflection and really know ourselves.
9. We shall never be victorious in this life as believers if we think that the zoe life, our life with God and hidden in Christ, means freedom from suffering, sorrow, and trial. In reality, we develop greater inner strength by participating in His sufferings; therefore we are to be anxious for nothing, not even our spiritual growth.
10. Every believer is commanded to take up his own cross and we must accept the fact that the cross has only suffering and death as its ministry.

People do not normally admire people when they go through adversity but in prosperity. Pro 19:6, *Many will entreat the favor of a generous man, And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.* The believer who lives in the zoe-life realizes that even during times of adversity they are not retreating, they are simply advancing in another direction. So, when some affliction happens to you, you either let it defeat you, or you defeat it. Problems indicate that progress is being made, wheels are turning, and you're moving closer to your goals. If we are going to receive the benefit of the cross, we must go through the suffering of the cross. When it comes to TLJC and your relationship with God, the ultimate question that needs to be answered is what is our motivation?

For us to experience zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, our ultimate motivation must be Him and Him alone and if we have this attitude then we will not be in bondage to the things of this world. The zoe-life means we will experience deliverance from bondage to the world and the stronghold of the cosmic system. As a reward for making positive decisions toward doctrine and the experience of a fantastic inner spiritual life, the zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, there is freedom from being in bondage to the cosmic system. This is why it is so important that when the believer begins to encounter sufferings in his life, that he does not run from those sufferings, but accepts them. The believer must come to a point where he is no longer blown away or about by the winds of false solutions to suffering, Eph 4:14. There is a place which can be reached by the mentality of the soul that enjoys this fantastic zoe-life, a life filled with inner happiness

and contentment. The soul of the believer becomes so confirmed in God that it can find nothing more satisfying in all creation.

So again Phi 4:11 gives us the principle of this eternal life, a life filled with inner happiness and contentment, *Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.* "Not" is the strongest Greek negative particle *ouk* translated not, with the causal conjunction *hoti* the correct translation is "not because." The present active indicative of the verb *lego* describes what is now going on in the life of the apostle Paul, in the active voice, Paul produces the action of the verb and the indicative mood is declarative for the reality of doctrinal communication under the principle of verbal inspiration in the original language of Scripture. Next comes the preposition *kath'* (from) plus the accusative noun *husteresin* (poverty or to lack). So we translate it, "not because I am speaking with reference to poverty or lack,".

Sooner or later you will have some people in your life who will appear to be very humble, very sweet, and will even appeal to your ego but you're going to find out that these people know how to manipulate others. They have a thousand ways in which they have their hand out. The true attitude of a mature believer is that he finds his contentment and fulfillment in Christ and does not go around like a beggar asking for things. Paul is complimenting the Philippian church because of their faithfulness and the manifestation of that faithfulness in time by supplying his need, but he wants to make it crystal clear that he is not doing so because he needed them or their gift. Paul has learned the very valuable lesson that God doesn't need anyone, so don't ever get involved with the Elijah syndrome. Remember, Elijah thought that the Lord really needed him to serve and that he was the only one who could minister to the people of God.

Rom 11:2-5, God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. God doesn't need any of us!

Phi 4:11, *Not because I am speaking with reference to poverty or lack; for* - The explanatory use of the conjunctive particle *gar* (for) gives the reason why Paul does not have to beg and next he gives us the reason why, "I have learned." Here we have the personal pronoun *ego* (I) then the aorist active indicative from the verb, *manthano* which means to learn through instruction, to come to know, to receive instruction under discipline, or to appropriate knowledge. Everything it took to get Paul to supergrace taught him to think objectively and to have capacity for true love. When you reach this stage you have an awareness of logistical grace and the fact that God *has* and will *provide* everything for you.

The next phrase in our verse is translated in whatsoever circumstances, the preposition *en* plus the relative pronoun *hois* correctly translated in whatever, and we add for clarity, circumstances or situations. You are not born with this instinct or understanding, it is something that has to be taught. No matter what the circumstances of life, you perpetuate happiness, contentment, and blessing no matter what the situation may be.

So far we have Phi 4:11, *Not because I am speaking with reference to poverty or lack; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.* If you are a mature believer, circumstances do not change you, you change circumstances. Everyone will have an experience in life that's dull; school, job, assignment, anything that is just plain boring! A dull circumstance can break a boring person and when it does these people quit. They are a slave to their circumstances and these people will never be happy for very long in this life. One of the great blessings that come to the supergrace believer is not to be broken by circumstances, but to make circumstances. You can turn a dull job or a dull course in

school into something very pleasant and very happy. You can do the same thing with disaster; however you have to have doctrine to do it. You can't handle disaster without doctrine! This unique ability belongs only to the supergrace believer. Arrogant people get bored with routine and discipline plus they think more highly of themselves than they ought to. Phi 4:11, *Not because I am speaking with reference to poverty or lack; for I have learned in whatever circumstances I am to be content.* The Greek adjective, *autarkes*, means self-sufficient contentment. This is adaptability to any difficult circumstance in life. If it's something dull, then you just weave a little web around it, and you encompass it with happiness, with challenge, with blessing, with stimulation. A mature believer, a supergrace or ultra supergrace believer becomes content and self sufficient all in one package. He takes the contentment in his soul wherever he goes and when he walks into a dull situation, he just takes his contentment out of his soul and sprays the place. The circumstances are still there, but there's a difference, contentment is with him, and with it he handles every circumstance of life.

This word, *autarkes*, or contentment has led us to the Doctrine of Contentment

Point 1. Definition.

The word *autarkes*, contentment, originates from Aeschylus and it means sufficient for oneself, strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support; to be independent of external circumstances. As the apostle Paul stated in 1Th 4:9-12, you are *"to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.* *Autarkes* also means to be contented with one's niche, with one's means, even though little. It means to be strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support. In the spiritual realm, *autarkes* means to be spiritually self-sustained and to become sufficient enough to be in need of no one else. In the New Testament the word is given a new dimension as part of living the spiritual life as in 1Ti 6:6.

Point 2. Godliness or Living the Spiritual Life that God has provided is a means of great profit when accompanied by contentment.

Godliness means that you're in the place where God can train you, that is, residence, function, and momentum inside the spiritual life that God has provided. This is a means of great profit because it is the beginning of the development of true contentment and the resultant inner happiness, becoming occupied with Christ, and having personal love for God. So *contentment* refers to the perfect happiness that began in spiritual self-esteem, continued in spiritual autonomy, and is completed in spiritual maturity. We then looked at providential preventative suffering as it relates to contentment.

Providential preventative suffering is the first category of suffering for blessing to rid us of arrogance and to produce more contentment in our lives. In the context of 2Co 12:7-10, it can be called thorn testing, *And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content [that's the beginning of perfect happiness] with weaknesses [providential preventative suffering]: in insults or slanders [people testing], with distresses or pressures [thought testing] with persecutions [system testing], with difficulties or stresses [disaster testing] on behalf of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.* The four types of testing mentioned in verse 10, are warm-ups for spiritual self-esteem designed to advance us to the momentum tests of spiritual autonomy; People testing, Thought testing, System testing and Disaster testing. As believers we must go through some form of testing that reveals our weakness so that we will realize where our strength truly resides. In order for our contentment to remain within and to increase, God must deal with any of the cob-webs of arrogance in our lives. Arrogance is an enemy to contentment (1Co 3:18, Isa 5:21, Rom 12:3) and remember that Satan is the first creature guilty of arrogance (Isa 14:14). His original

sin of arrogance is amplified in Eze 28:17, he was corrupted by his wisdom, he thought he knew more than God. Arrogance is synonymous with vanity, which is empty pride in regard to one's person, attainments, or possessions coupled with an excessive desire to be noticed, a lust for attention, lust for approval or praise from others. Providential preventative suffering is designed to rid you of this arrogance and it is the first category of suffering for blessing. Spiritual self-esteem is most vulnerable to arrogance without providential preventative suffering, which God graciously provides.

The four types of testing mentioned in verse 10 are warm-ups for spiritual self-esteem in order to advance us to spiritual autonomy and you pass these tests by having contentment, the beginning of perfect happiness. There is enough happiness in your soul from spiritual self-esteem so that you can be happy in all categories of providential preventative suffering. Only in this Church-age has God provided a well-organized system for us to have fantastic blessing in the midst of suffering and this suffering can be just as great a blessing as any prosperous circumstances. Providential preventative suffering brings you to the point where you realize life and the devil are bigger than you, and that you won't be able to solve your problems on your own. You realize that strength comes from the use of the problem solving devices. It often takes a lot to make someone realize they are weak, especially if when one is high-spirited and strong-willed, however, until you know you're weak, you will never be strong. To the extent that you have illusions about your so-called strong points, you are depriving yourself of the blessings of grace. True strength comes from using divine power to match your weakness, rather than using human power to hold at bay God's grace provision for you.

There will be different forms of testing in your life to strengthen your contentment. People testing comes in two categories. 1) In personal love or admiration, the object of your love often controls your life or provides for you unhappiness, unless you have attained spiritual self-esteem, spiritual independence, or spiritual maturity. In wanting to please the object of your personal love, you find yourself being a different person and not following your normal function. 2) In personal hatred or animosity, the object of your antagonism or irritation often has control of your life or happiness, unless you have advanced to spiritual adulthood. Under the PPOG, God designed His plan so that your happiness and contentment will always reside in you, so that you do not depend on people or things for your happiness. As a function of your royal priesthood it all comes from within.

You are to have personal control of your life, a personal sense of destiny, self-confidence from metabolized doctrine, contentment, and therefore, poise and command of self. This means your not easily swayed and moved by others and their doctrinal opinions because that is how you become unstable, Eph 4:14. You are to bring happiness and contentment to others but not to lean on others or circumstances for your happiness or contentment. People are easily led away from the PPOG and doctrine by their friendships, love life, and even hatred, (Pro 13:20, Psa 119:63, Mal 3:16). The solution to people testing is found in the combination of personal love for God and impersonal love for all mankind.

Another form of suffering for blessing to strengthen your contentment is thought testing, and Rom 12:3 addresses the problem, *For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think* [in other words, stop thinking in terms of arrogance]; *but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.* Once you reach spiritual self-esteem, you begin to recognize your abilities, your capabilities, what you can handle and what you cannot. Gal 6:3 says, *For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* 1Co 10:12 warns us not to think more highly of ourselves, like thinking that we are beyond reproach and not as bad as other believers, and since thinking is such a crucial issue, there are mandates throughout the Bible with regard to thought testing.

Then there is system testing. By now you're aware of the fact that the world is filled with organizations. Everywhere that you turn in life it is inevitable that you become a part of a system or an organization. A system is an organization composed of people under the command of other people

functioning under a policy which is designed to fulfill a specific objective. When you become a part of any organization, one of the first things that you discover is that every organization has a command structure, a chain of command. Some systems are good and some are bad, however, the issue is this, do you enter into the system or organization with the perfect happiness and contentment from God. If you enter in with the power of God, you will not only do well in that organization and you will do well in representing the Lord as an ambassador. You may be the low person on the totem pole but with the power of God you will go far (1Co 10:31)! The characteristics of a system are three-fold; Authority, Policy and Objective. The personnel under authority as well as the authority itself can face system testing. The policy of management and the objective of the organization can also cause system testing. There are good and bad organizations, systems, leadership, policies and objectives. Generally, there are three areas of system testing. 1) The authority may give unfair and unjust treatment, as from management, the boss, supervisor, senior officer, coach, professor, government bureaucrat, husband, parents, etc. Favoritism on the part of management can inevitably lead to personality conflict in an office. 2) The policy may be unreasonable, or may conflict with normal living or with your own personal norms and standards, or it may be a stupid though still enforceable policy. 3) The objectives may be unreasonable or even impossible because of lack of ability in the personnel trying to fulfill them. The greatest enemy to any organization is arrogance in its personnel. Arrogance is the great enemy wherever there are people. Incapability, laziness, distraction from wrong priorities and ignorance are other enemies.

Then there is disaster testing. Before the believer reaches spiritual maturity and has +H and real contentment, there will be some major disasters in their life. How the believer handles these circumstances determines whether he accelerates his spiritual growth or retreats and goes backward. In Psa 57:1 David tells us how to handle disaster, *"Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in Thee; And in the shadow of Thy wings I will take refuge, until destruction passes by."* There are two categories of disaster testing. The first is personal disaster testing is designed as suffering for blessing resulting in acceleration of momentum, or warning of cosmic involvement, in which case divine discipline becomes involved. There are at least six characteristics of personal disaster testing. A) Pain, e.g., physical or mental pain and anguish. B) Crime, where you are the victim. C) Persecution (not paranoia). D) Privation, meaning hunger, thirst, exposure, fatigue. E) Loss of loved ones, property, success, money, etc. F) Disease and handicaps. The second category is historical disaster, collective disaster, or national disaster testing as related to the bad decisions of others in which you are involved by association. There are at least six characteristics of historical disaster testing. A) Pain, e.g., physical or mental pain and anguish. B) Crime, where you are the victim. C) Persecution (not paranoia). D) Privation, meaning hunger, thirst, exposure, fatigue. E) Loss of loved ones, property, success, money, etc. F) Disease and handicaps. Specific to national disaster testing there are four categories. A) Violence, crime, terrorism, dope, murder. B) Warfare. C) Weather disaster includes heat, cold, storm, blizzards, hurricanes, tornadoes. D) Cycles of discipline. Disaster testing always tests our emotions and there is always the temptation to take the easy route of money, security, fame, and lose forever the conveyance of escrow blessing. There is always the disaster that will make you prosperous if you rely on the power of God to pull you through, and that is contentment!

THE DOCTRINE OF CONTENTMENT, PART 2

Philippians 4:11

12/26/04

Our main verse is Phi 4:11, *Not because I am speaking with reference to poverty or lack; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.*

We are now ready to complete our study of the Doctrine of Contentment.

As a review, Point 1 was our definition. The word autarkes, contentment, comes from Aeschylus down to us and it means sufficient for oneself, strong enough or possessing enough inner strength to need no aid or support; (like Valium, prozac, coladapin, Zoloft, Paxil, or any other prescription medicine for stress and anxiety); it means to be independent of external circumstances. Autarkes also means to be contented with one's niche, with one's means, even though little. It means to be strong enough or possessing enough strength to need no aid or support from others. In the spiritual realm, autarkes means to be spiritually self-sustained and to become sufficient enough to be in need of no one else. It also means "to be satisfied and contented with your wages.

Point 2. Godliness or Living the Spiritual Life That God Has Provided is a Means of Great Profit When Accompanied by Contentment.

We continue with Point 3. The Challenge to Contentment is Boredom.

Far too many people are not content in whatever circumstances they find themselves and become bored and dull. These people have problems doing the same thing(s) again and again, they feel like their job or even their life is boring, tiresome and just routine. Many things we do in life are monotonous, exhausting and tiresome, and looking at the things you do habitually as being monotonous can cause you to feel like life has no meaning, purpose or significance and this is because you lack contentment in your life. Ecc 3:9-10, *What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils? I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.* The point is we are all going to have high and low points in our lives. The kingdom of darkness will try to use these times of lows for sensual temptations, particularly those of sex. It has to do with a physiological need that the individual has and then through satanic deception, it turns into all sorts of things.

Remember the beginning of David's biggest problem in 2Sa 11:1, *Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem.* This was a low point in David's life. He stayed back when he should have gone forward. He was becoming dull and stagnant; he had lost his contentment with the calling of God upon his life. The spring was the time in the ancient world for military activity and the norm and standard was for the king to go out to battle with his soldiers. Instead of going out himself David had sent Joab his chief of staff and his nephews, so David's real problems began by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Even though he is a mature believer he fell into a state of degeneracy. Arrogance and lack of contentment led to his vulnerability when he saw a beautiful woman bathing herself on the roof below Castle Zion. 2Sa 11:2, *Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.* Apparently he had been sleeping during the day, it was a low point in his life and another indication of David's spiritual status, he is sleeping during the day time while his soldiers are out fighting the war. Satan and his kingdom of darkness will try to use this time of lows or monotony with the routines of life to provide excellent opportunity for sensual temptations.

We need to be careful of these changes we go through that can produce highs and lows in our life and realize they are normal cycles for members of the human race. As long as we live on this earth, periods of emotional and physical highs will alternate with periods of apathy, calmness and passivity

about certain things. There are times that we all go through a state of dryness and even dullness in all areas of our life including the spiritual realm. To live on the dull edge is really to become a slave to life instead of the life that Paul wrote about in 1Co 9:26-27, *Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.* You cannot allow anything to take the fun and challenge out of life. To truly enjoy what you have is a very rare lifestyle. If you were to ask the people in your life the question, 'what are you waiting for to truly enjoy life?', you would probably get one of the three different categories of answers that naturally come from the world system in which we live and God has an answer for each one of them.

1. Some would answer "I'm waiting until I get the things I've always wanted, then I'll be happy." Our Lord answered this in Luk 12:15, *"And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."* It's foolish to connect happiness with things! If happiness could be found in having material things and in being able to indulge yourself into things that you consider pleasurable, than we in America would be deliriously happy.
2. Other people would answer "I'm waiting until I meet the right person who will fulfill my life." Don't put your faith in people to make you happy. David said in Psa 118:8, *It is better to take refuge in the Lord Than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord Than to trust in princes.* If you're waiting for some thing or someone to bring you happiness, you're in for a lifetime of waiting.
3. A third possible answer, "I'm waiting until I have achieved my goals and realized my dreams." Goals and dreams, as great as they may be and as much as they keep us plugging in the valley, will only bring momentary satisfaction. We spend so much time climbing, anticipating the view when we get there, and miss out on enjoying the view along the way. Our Lord answered this principle in Mat 16:26, *"For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

In Jam 1:2-4, *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* It's not only waiting for that day to find the pinnacle or the plateau of happiness and contentment but finding it in the climb, in the struggle!

Point 4. Contentment is related to lifestyle; Heb 13:5.

Heb 13:5 is another important passage about contentment, *Let your lifestyle [not character but lifestyle] be free from the love for money, being content [+H] with what you have. For He Himself has said [Deu 31:6], 'I will never leave you nor will I ever forsake you.* Here's another example of why we go back to the original language and why we use the NAS Bible. The KJV says Heb 13:5, *Let your conversation be without covetousness;* The word translated love for money in the NAS and covetousness is the KJB is *aphilarguros*. *Arguros* means money! *Phileo* means to love. The negative a means don't. So it means, don't love money not don't be covetous. The word lifestyle is *tropos* which means your lifestyle or character not conversation! So it is correctly translated in the NAS Heb 13:5, *Let your lifestyle [not character but lifestyle] be free from the love for money, being content with what you have. For He Himself has said [Deu 31:6], 'I will never leave you nor will I ever forsake you.* Remember that there is nothing wrong with money; it is necessary to live. But when money becomes your master, you become a pitiful slave to money. So, your lifestyle is to be free from the love for money, not just your conversation but your lifestyle. This verse does not say Thou shalt not talk about loving money. The objective is to have money as your slave and perfect happiness as your master and if you are content with what you have, you have perfect happiness in spiritual autonomy, the second stage of spiritual growth. The promise in this verse is God's guarantee to you from the day of your salvation, based upon God's perfect integrity, He will never leave you or forsake you. This promise

assures you of both temporal and eternal security. God will never leave you in life, nor forsake you in dying. However, as we have seen, this doesn't prevent God from disciplining you or allowing the law of volitional responsibility to function. Remember also that you can be poor and be a lover of money or you can be as rich as Solomon and be a lover of money. When a person loves money, money is their master and money is a very cruel master. But when you enjoy money and are content, you are the master and money is the slave and money makes a very good slave.

Point 5. Contentment is the Result of Spiritual Maturity; Phi 4:11-13.

Phi 4:11 Not that I speak with reference to need, for I have learned to be content [+H or to have capacity for life] in whatever circumstances I am.

You still have the Lord and you still have doctrine in your soul and the doctrine in the soul gives you capacity for life. Having things, acquiring things, collecting things, isn't going to change you. But, having doctrine in the soul, you'll have the capacity to enjoy life, and it really is wonderful and very enjoyable.

So Paul says in Phi 4:12, *I have come to know how to be humbled and I have come to know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret or as we are going to note when we get there I have been initiated into the mystery of how to be filled, how to be hungry, how to be prosperous, and how to suffer need. I have the power to attain all things through Him [God the Father] who makes me strong."*

Once you reach spiritual maturity, you have an entirely new and refreshing system of thinking, you never think in terms of needs. We all continue to have needs, but they become less and less important as we advance through the stages of spiritual adulthood because one finally comes to realize that God has known his needs all along. You still plan, still organize, but your needs aren't nearly as important once you reach spiritual adulthood, resulting in an improved prayer life that doesn't include all your needs. As long as your needs have number one priority in your life, it's impossible for you to reach spiritual adulthood. This passage tells us that contentment and happiness is something you learn, not something you have, want, or anticipate. You must learn how to live in adversity and how to live in prosperity.

To learn to be content takes a lot of doctrine repeated, knowledge about the uniqueness of the Church-age and all the mystery doctrine resulting in understanding your personal sense of destiny. You must also learn how to be prosperous and how to be happy in prosperity; yet very few prosperous people understand this. It is difficult for prosperity to successfully work in anyone simply because of arrogance. The arrogance of those in prosperity is manifested by 1Co 4:7, *What are you so puffed up about? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why act as though you are so great, and as though you have accomplished something on your own?* Arrogance destroys capacity for life and especially capacity for prosperity.

Phi 4:12, *I have come to know how to be humbled and I have come to know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret or have been initiated into the mystery of how to be filled, how to be hungry, how to be prosperous, and how to suffer need.* Note the phrase *how to be prosperous and how to suffer need* both categories are necessary for the advance to spiritual maturity and the fulfillment of the spiritual life that God has provided. Paul attained the fantastic point of having God's perfect happiness and true contentment in every possible circumstance through obedience to Bible doctrine. Circumstances make no difference if you have doctrine in the soul. You have capacity for life so the circumstances couldn't possibly bother you for any length of time in any way. And then he tells us how in Phi 4:13, *I have the power to attain all things through Him who makes me strong."* This is a reference to the availability of divine omnipotence for the execution of the spiritual life that God has provided for the Church-age believer. It is a reference to the same power available to us in the great power experiment of the Church-age as TLJC used before and on the cross.

Our Lord was able to remain perfect, though judged for all the sins of the world, because He was sustained by the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit and because He had perfect happiness, the greatest of all problem solving devices. Whether you are strong or not depends on you learning that God's power exists in three categories (omnipotence of the Father, omnipotence of the Son, and omnipotence of the Spirit) and that it is available to you, and then utilizing it through the perception of doctrine. It is very important for you to attain contentment and perfect happiness before you die, in fact it is the only way to die and the only way to live. Perfect happiness and true contentment actually equates living with dying for the believer. So whatever the circumstances, you still have perfect happiness. That's why Paul said in Phi 1:21, "*For me, living is Christ and dying is profit.*"

So in Phi 4:13, Paul says, *I have the power to attain all things*, this refers to the three stages of spiritual adulthood, the problem solving devices and the believer's tremendous invisible impact on history. Perfect happiness and true contentment is increased at each stage of spiritual adulthood but it must be learned. You have the same opportunity to attain the same spiritual adulthood and perfect happiness and invisible impact.

Then finally in Phi 4:13, Paul says, *I have the power to attain all things through Him* [God the Father] *who makes me strong.*" The source of this power is the Father, "through Him, the preposition en + instrumental of agency expresses personal agency. This is the same power available to our Lord in Hypostatic Union and this power is now available to us. *Endunamoo* can be translated either through Him who makes me strong, or through Him who pours the power into me. It is God the Father who makes this power available to you.