

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 1

Ephesians 1:3–6

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

BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word for blessed is #2128 *eulogētos*. The *Strong's Concordance* defines the word as “well spoken of, i.e. blessed.” Its usage is that which is ascribed as “only of God.” *HELPS Word-studies* states in relationship to the word that “only God is inherently praiseworthy, deserving every ‘good acknowledgment.’” The apostle in writing to the Ephesians states that which to himself is a well-known fact, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of the highest praise and adulation, that all praise and glory should be directed toward heaven simply because the Lord is worthy of it. The apostle’s hope is that after the Ephesians are exposed to the breathtaking and heavenly revelation that he is about to impart to them, they will

recognize, as did the apostle himself, why the Lord is worthy to be praised, eulogized, and adored in such a manner. It is this end result that Paul seeks to be evidenced by the Ephesians—that they would praise the Lord as rightfully He should be praised. To accomplish this purpose, greater revelation concerning their redemption needed to be revealed. At the core of God’s holy nature is that He is good.¹ This goodness is displayed in every divine act in man’s salvation, culminating in the believer being raised to sit with Christ² and being blessed through Christ in heavenly places. The grounds for why the Lord is to be blessed and praised lie in His generous role in the complete salvation and transformation of man, from regeneration³ to ultimately heavenly habitation. All salvation originated in the mind of God long before it ever entered the ear of man. It is He Who has purposed it, planned it, and through His Son, accomplished it. To save some⁴ has

1 Ps. 100:5 *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

Nah. 1:7 *The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*

Ps. 25:8 *Good and upright is the LORD; therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*

2 Eph. 2:6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

3 Tit. 3:5–7 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; °Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; °That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

4 Acts 13:48 *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

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always been, since the foundation of the world, the intention of the Lord.

The sole reason that practically every blessing that has ever been given and conferred upon mankind is that the Lord first willed it. This revelation first appeared in the Old Testament, and Paul's letter to the Ephesians is just a further, although more revealing, example of this. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11 NIV). Jeremiah encapsulates what God's will and God's plan is for the saved. It is to provide both *hope* and a *future* for His people. Ephesians is a detailed and generous example of the Lord doing just this.

Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Verse 3 has three important elements: (1) The plain statement of fact that God is to be blessed and praised; (2) the reason God is to be treated so; (3) the One in Whom these blessings are provided.

In Christ. Practically there are no blessings either reserved or purposed for any soul that are not directly related to the Son of God. In Him has the salvation of man been purposed by God, and apart from Him there can be none. Hence, any who have not been purposed for heavenly habitation through Jesus Christ have not been purposed for heaven at all. It is *in Christ*, and only through Him, that the Lord has provided a future for the sinner. In Jesus has the penitent been forgiven, and in Him has the believer been chosen.

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Here we have the design and purpose for election. It is that those chosen by God in Jesus Christ have been purposed to be found *holy and without blame* before Him. It is from election that all spiritual blessings originate and because of election that they are secure. It is in His Son that they have been chosen, and through Him that they will be found *holy and without blame before him*. The timing of this election is said to have taken place before the foundation of the world. Before the material world was, God chose for Himself those purposed to be saved and to become His sons.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 1:4) *Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*; literally, he chose us out, or selected us (ἐξελέξατο) for himself (middle voice). The Father chose the heirs of salvation, selected those who were to be quickened from the dead (Ephesians 2:1)⁵ and saved, they chose them in Christ—in connection with his work and office as Mediator, giving them to him to be re-decreed (John 17:11, 12);⁶ not after man was created, nor after man had fallen, but "before the foundation of the world." We are here face to face with a profound mystery. Before even the world was founded, mankind presented themselves to God as lost; the work of redemption was planned and its details arranged from all eternity.

That we should be holy and without blame. To be made *holy* is to be made different, separate from others, and like unto God in nature. The *Strong's Concordance*

⁵ Eph. 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

⁶ John 17:11–12 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

¹² *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

defines *holy* (*hagios*)⁷ as “sacred, holy” “set apart by (or for) God, holy, sacred.” HELPS *Word-studies* states of the word, “The fundamental (core) meaning of 40 (*hágios*) is ‘different’—thus a temple in the 1st century was *hagios* (‘holy’) because [of it being] different from other buildings (Wm. Barclay). In the NT, 40 /*hágios* (‘holy’) has the ‘technical’ meaning ‘different from the world’ because [of it being] ‘like the Lord.’” For those chosen in Christ, this reveals that they were chosen by God in order that they would be made sacred, set apart from others, and consecrated to be God’s own. That which is *holy* is that which has been disunited out from the world to be reckoned for the use and possession of God. In conjunction with being made holy by the Lord, those chosen in His Son are also purposed to be found without blame. It is God Whom all men must stand before to be found either accepted or rejected by Him. It is He Who is man’s final Judge, and there is no other. Thus, becoming accepted by the Lord is the final result of all salvation. The English words *without blame* are one Greek word, *amomos*; both the *Strong’s Concordance* and the *NAS Exhaustive Concordance* define the word “without blemish.” The NASB translation is “above reproach (1), blameless (5), unblemished (1), without blemish (1).”⁸ It is this final state of being made holy and without blemish that is the Lord’s endmost design for those chosen in His Son, that they might be, from Christ’s redemptive work, freed from the disease of sin and all that which is contained in their old nature,⁹ which has repeatedly defiled God’s original creation. Sin makes man unacceptable to the Lord; through His Son this human failure can

be removed—so much so that all that will be left is a new creation,¹⁰ created by divine power and might, holy and without blemish in God’s sight. This is the ultimate purpose and design of being chosen in Christ, that all previous blame before God is removed. Understandably, those saved through the Son of God were chosen not because they were holy but so that through God’s plan of redemption they could be *made* holy. This is a work that will require God’s power, simply because it is impossible through any human ability for a man to either make himself holy or so remove sin from himself that all spiritual blame before God no longer exists.

For us to more fully understand and hopefully believe in the spiritual reality of election and predestination as the foundation of being accepted by God, a closer study of this topic will be helpful. Second Timothy speaks on this subject.

II Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

The apostle understood that both his salvation and calling, as well as Timothy’s salvation and calling, were solely because of the Lord’s purpose for their lives. Ultimately a man could only either be saved by his own work, worth, or person—or by God’s purpose (not both). And since no man’s inherent state could ever make him worthy of heaven, then only God’s will and God’s purpose for his life can get him there. This is why if salvation is not by election, then there

⁷ *Strong’s Concordance*, #40

⁸ *NAS Exhaustive Concordance*

⁹ Eph. 4:22 *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

Col. 3:9 *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;*

¹⁰ II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

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can be none, primarily because through themselves *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*¹¹ Because no man is either good or can be saved through himself,¹² then the only chance of being saved is if the Lord chooses to save man. Thus, without election no man could ever be saved. If any choose to argue and debate about men being saved by divine choice, they must believe that human holiness can be sufficiently developed in order that the sinner can save himself. Because if salvation is not by God's choice, then it must be by human works. Practically, there are only two paths whereby men can be saved—either through their own worth or by God's purpose. To choose one will result in rejecting the other. Thus, if divine election is not the only cause for the believer's salvation, then men must be saved because of something inherently good within themselves—something that Scripture reveals is impossible.

Before him in love. The reason the believer has been made holy and without blame before God is God's love. Hence, if a man asks himself, "Why such an act of grace?" the answer lies in the depth of divine love. Believers have been purposed for heaven,

because the love of God abides there, and they will enter heaven because His love brings them there.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 1:4) (1) it was love for us which prompted to it.

(2) it is the highest expression of love to be ordained to eternal life—for what higher love could God show us?

(3) it is love on his part, because we had no claim to it, and had not deserved it. If this be the correct view, then the doctrine of predestination is not inconsistent with the highest moral excellence in the divine character, and should never be represented as the offspring of partiality and injustice. Then too we should give thanks that "God 'has, in love,' predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will."

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. It is not just salvation but heavenly sonship that God has purposed for the elect.¹³

11 Rom. 3:12 *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

12 Rom. 3:10–20 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: ¹⁴Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵Their feet are swift to shed blood: ¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their ways: ¹⁷And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸There is no fear of God before their eyes. ¹⁹Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

13 John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Rom. 8:28–30 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Hence it is not just that the believer is to be saved by the will of God, but also that by divine purpose he will be made a son of God. It is worthy of note that to save someone is a far different thing than making him a son. These are in fact two completely different benevolent actions. Many are saved from danger, harm, or peril but are not given the honor of becoming sons of whom they have been saved. Yet this is exactly what the Lord has purposed for those chosen in Christ—since they have been predestinated because of love to be adopted as God’s sons.¹⁴ To be saved is an act of divine grace; to be made a son of God is a privilege of immeasurable honor. No believer is born a son of God by natural birth but by spiritual adoption, and because of divine love he has become one. What is also true is that no true child of God could ever be, or would ever be, brought into the family of God if he remained either unholy or unclean. This is why those predestinated to be in the body of Christ have been created in righteousness and true holiness.¹⁵ Only the righteous will enter heaven,¹⁶ and those chosen in Jesus Christ have been made just this.¹⁷ *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith* (Phil. 3:9).

The Greek word for *predestinated* is #4309 *proorizó*. It is defined in the *Strong’s Con-*

cordance as “to predetermine, foreordain.” *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines the word as “to foreordain, appoint beforehand, Romans 8:29.”¹⁸ By this it is revealed that those predestinated to be adopted by God as His sons were foreordained to become such. Spiritual adoption is therefore not by accident or chance but by premeditated divine purpose. All true spiritual sonship is therefore according to divine purpose and not either human choice or human chance. It is the Lord Who has predestinated those He will save and those He will not. Hence, it is not men who can by their determination make themselves the children of God but only the Lord, Who purposes if they can be.

According to the good pleasure of his will. At the foundation of why God would foreordain heavenly sons is simply that it is in accordance with His own divine will. What this teaches us is the reason that sinners are made sons. The reason they are made holy and without blame before God, and the reason that God has purposed these newly adopted sons to be blessed with *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places* is simply that it was God’s good pleasure to do so. There is no other reason that the Lord would elect a sinner to be made His son than through love, He wished to do so. It is also this same will of God, prompted by the love of God, that makes election so secure. Since it is God Who chooses who are to be Christians, it

Mark 13:27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Rom. 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.

14 Rom. 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

15 Eph. 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

16 Matt. 5:19–20 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

17 II Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

18 Rom. 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

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is certainly by divine power that He will keep them such. What God has willed, shall be done. In contrast to this is when men will something in the future but because of their limited natural power, they cannot be certain that they will accomplish it. This is not so with God. For there is nothing that the Lord has ever willed that has not without exception become in even the smallest detail a visible reality.¹⁹ Consequently, if the Lord has purposed it, it is the exact same thing as His already doing it. Whatever God wills, whether in heaven or the earth, cannot either by devil or man be hindered from being accomplished. It is also worth noting that not only does the Lord will to make someone His son, but He actually greatly desires to do so. It is through heavenly delight that the Lord saves a soul. Salvation therefore is not something that must be pried from unwilling divine hands, since it is something God wishes through His own good pleasure to give. *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom* (Luke 12:32).

(Benson Commentary, Luke 12:32) for it is your Father's good pleasure, &c. — *Εὐδοκῆσεν*, he takes delight, or joyfully acquiesces, in giving you the kingdom, even the kingdom of eternal glory; and can you possibly imagine, that while he intends to be-

stow that upon you, and even takes pleasure in the thought of making you so rich, great, and happy there, he will refuse you those earthly supplies, such as food and raiment, which he liberally imparts even to strangers and enemies?

Both salvation and sonship are things the Lord has desired to do, and not something because of guilt or any other negative emotion He feels He has to do. To save a man therefore is by every conceivable metric a delight to God. It is His good pleasure to save the lost, and therefore none should ever surmise nor imagine that they are asking anything of the Lord regarding their salvation that is beyond what is God's own good pleasure to give. In short, the salvation of man, and all that is entailed with it, including being given spiritual sonship and being made a joint heir with Christ, is a delight to Him Who has purposed it. The Lord takes great delight and satisfaction when those purposed for heaven are then made to inherit it.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Moses prayed, *Shew me thy glory.*²⁰ The Lord responded with, *I [myself] will make*

19 Prophecy: Gen. 3:15 *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Fulfilled: Gal. 4:4–5 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Fulfilled: Matt. 1:18 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*

Prophecy: Gen. 12:3 *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

Gal. 3:8 *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

Fulfilled: Acts 3:25–26 *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. ²⁶Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*

Prophecy: Ps. 110:1 *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

Fulfilled: Mark 16:19 *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

20 Exod. 33:18 *And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*

*all my goodness pass before thee.*²¹ At the base of God's glory that the Lord revealed to His servant Moses is His heavenly goodness. Thus, the Lord's glory is most aptly defined by Him as His own abounding goodness, manifested by providing both grace and mercy to those who need it. It is this heavenly virtue possessed by the Lord that is the fundamental reason He is to be praised. The Exodus record reveals that the glory of the Lord, and why men should praise Him, is directly linked to the Lord's own divine goodness.

Exodus 33:18-19 *And [Moses] said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*

¹⁹ *And [the LORD] said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

(Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Exod. 33:18) What Moses desired to see, as the answer of God clearly shows, must have been something surpassing all former revelations of the glory of Jehovah (Exodus 16:7, Exodus 16:10; Exodus 24:16-17),²² and even going beyond Jehovah's talking with him face to face (Exodus 33:11).²³ When God talked with him face to face, or mouth to mouth, he merely saw a "similitude of Jehovah" (Numbers 12:8),²⁴ a

form which rendered the invisible being of God visible to the human eye, i.e., a manifestation of the divine glory in a certain form, and not the direct or essential glory of Jehovah, whilst the people saw this glory under the veil of a dark cloud, rendered luminous by fire, that is to say, they only saw its splendour as it shone through the cloud; and even the elders, at the time when the covenant was made, only saw the God of Israel in a certain form which hid from their eyes the essential being of God (Exodus 24:10-11).²⁵ What Moses desired, therefore, was a sight of the glory or essential being of God, without any figure, and without a veil.

Moses' prayer was *Shew me thy glory*. God's response was that He would make all His *goodness pass before* Moses. It is this heavenly goodness that is the centerpiece of the Lord's glory and that which He greatly desires to reveal to those who seek Him. Hence, it is the Lord's personal benevolent goodness, manifested in His giving grace and mercy to those who need it, that is the fundamental reason that both praise and glory are due His name.²⁶

The record of God revealing His glory to Moses continues:

Exodus 33:20-23 *And [God] said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*

21 *Exod. 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

22 *Exod. 16:7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?*

Exod. 16:10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

Exod. 24:16-17 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

23 *Exod. 33:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.*

24 *Num. 12:8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?*

25 *Exod. 24:10-11 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. ¹¹ And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.*

26 *Ps. 29:2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

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²¹ *And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:*

²² *And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:*

²³ *And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*

If we understand that Moses was not able to look directly upon the Lord because of the blinding presence of God, then it is not too difficult to surmise that when he beheld the back side of the Lord, he was actually exposed to a light that emanated God's goodness. For if God was to show Moses His glory, then the Lord's goodness must have accompanied His presence. To then see the Lord properly, without also a veil between Him and us, is to observe and come to know the expansiveness and depth of His divine goodness. This, no doubt, is what Moses perceived when he was by divine grace exposed to the Lord's glory, a glory that manifested itself in celestial light and that contained direct exposure to the glory, albeit goodness, of God. Divine goodness, like light, can be felt, and especially so when its source is man's Creator. Ultimately, that which God considers His greatest attribute is not His ability to put down the wicked²⁷ nor His power to bring the proud low,²⁸ but rather to provide both mercy and compassion on those who by their own right remain completely unworthy of it.

27 Ps. 145:20 *The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*

28 Isa. 2:12 *For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:*

29 Gen. 6:8 *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*

30 Matt. 3:17 *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

31 John 17:20–24 *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; ²¹That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²²And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ²³I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. ²⁴Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

It is this glory and this divine goodness that Moses was directly exposed to. It is also this goodness that was evident in the Son of God, and which He was purposed to reveal to the world. *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him* (Acts 10:38).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 10:38) Who went about doing good—*Whose main business it was to travel from place to place to do good. He did not go for applause, or wealth, or comfort, or ease, but to diffuse happiness as far as possible. This is the simple but sublime record of his life. It gives us a distinct portrait of his character, as he is distinguished from conquerors and kings, from false prophets and from the mass of people.

There is another great revelation in the Exodus record: it is that Moses prayed, *If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people* (Exod. 33:13). It was therefore the favor that Moses had found in God's sight, as also with Noah,²⁹ that provided for the deliverance of Israel. Because Moses had found favor in God's eyes, this allowed His prayer for Israel to be answered. This is also exactly the same heavenly process whereby sinners are saved today. As with Moses, God's only begotten Son was favored in God's sight,³⁰ and Christ's prayer,³¹ like Moses' prayer in Exodus, would be answered. Christians are thus both saved and blessed because

Jesus Christ is favored in heaven. Because Christ pleased the Father,³² His will for His people is secure. The grace that is the possession of One, Jesus Christ, is thus passed onto the many, those chosen by God in Him. *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ* (Rom. 5:17).

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Rom. 5:17)

Here he shows the difference in respect of the effects and consequents of their acts. If by means of one man and his one offence death had power over all mankind, then much more shall the grace and gift of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ alone, obtain eternal life for all that have received abundant grace and mercy from him.

To the praise of the glory of his grace.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 1:6) *To the praise of the glory of his grace—...* The meaning is, that the doctrine of predestination and election lays the foundation of adoring gratitude and praise. ... "all" that is done by election is suited to excite praise. Election is to life, and pardon, and holiness, and heaven.

He hath made us accepted in the beloved. It is in Christ that we are made acceptable to God, and in Christ that we have been made to become worthy of receiving divine sonship. There is also no man, no sinner, nor any religious convert who can be found acceptable in God's sight, other than through his being both called and chosen in the Son of God. In Him the hope of all mankind rests, and apart from Him there is no hope of ever being accepted in the beloved.³³

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Eph. 1:6) *He hath made us accepted in the beloved;* having chosen us in Christ, he likewise favours us, is well pleased with us in Christ, to whom we are united, whose members we are, and in whom God looks upon us. We are hateful in ourselves as sinners, but accepted in Christ as sons.

In ourselves we are nothing but sinners, yet by divine grace we have become God's sons. There is also no grace, nor favor, that has ever been given to man that can match or exceed the grace and favor given through Jesus Christ. *And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* (John 1:16–17).

³² John 8:29 *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*

³³ Acts 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

I Tim. 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 2

Ephesians 1:7–10

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

God's divine grace provided through Him, is the sole hope of redemption and forgiveness for sin.

THE *in whom*¹ spoken of is God's Son. The grace that is given to us and that we are to praise God for is given through the very one Whom God most intimately loves. It is in Him, the Son of God, and only through Him, Jesus, that there is provided both redemption and forgiveness for sin. First John similarly reveals that the life given to us resides in God's Son.² It is first obtained through Him and is then treasured up in Him.³ Ultimately the source of redemption, forgiveness for sin, and life is in Him Whom the Scriptures reveal is the Author and Prince of life.⁴ This is why any who do not have true relationship with the Son of God remain dead in their sin⁵ and consequently await heavenly judgment for it—since only in Christ, and through

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 1:7) *The forgiveness of sins*—We obtain through his blood, or through the atonement which he has made, the forgiveness of sins. We are not to suppose that this is all the benefit which we receive from his death, or that this is all that constitutes redemption. It is the main, and perhaps the most important thing. But we also obtain the hope of heaven, the influences of the Holy Spirit, grace to guide us and to support us in trial, peace in death, and perhaps many more benefits. Still “forgiveness” is so prominent and important, that the apostle has mentioned that as if it were all.

Redemption through his blood. At the foundation of heavenly redemption lie blood and death. Because forgiveness demands that atonement must first be made for sin,⁶ then to be forgiven, blood must be shed. For divine grace to be actually

1 Rom. 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

Rom. 5:15 *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*
Rom. 5:21 *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2 1 John 5:11 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

3 Col. 3:3 *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

4 Acts 3:15 *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.*

5 Eph. 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

Eph. 2:5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
Col. 2:13 *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

6 Lev. 16:15–16 *Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the*

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provided for sinners by God, earthly sacrifice must be made—because only when blood has been poured out for sin⁷ can there be true redemption from it. What this also reveals is this: that there cannot exist divine grace apart from divine justice, and this justice must include the shedding of blood and death for sin, either our own or that of another. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him* (Ezek. 18:20).

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. What Ezekiel teaches us is that where there is sin, there must ultimately come death. This principle was first revealed at the onset of God's creation of man. The Lord had instructed Adam and Eve that they could freely eat of every tree in the garden, but regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they were forbidden to eat. If they broke God's will and broke the Word of God given to them, the sentence was irrevocably death. *And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it:*

for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:15–17).

(*Benson Commentary*, Gen. 2:17) *Thou shalt surely die*—The death here threatened is evidently to be considered as opposed to the life (or *lives* rather, Genesis 2:7⁸) which God had bestowed on him. This was not only the *natural life* of his body, in its union with his soul, but the *spiritual life* of his soul, in its union with God, and the *eternal life* of both. The threatening then implies: Thou shalt not only lose all the happiness thou hast, either in possession or prospect, and become liable to the death of thy body, and all the miseries which precede and accompany it; but thou shalt lose thy *spiritual life*, and become dead to God and things divine, and shalt even forfeit thy title to immortality, and be liable to death eternal. And all this *in the day thou eatest thereof*.

There was but one standard by which to try man's fidelity, and if he could not meet this standard, which required both submission and obedience to divine will, then this proved him unfit for eternal life. At the onset of their creation, Adam and Eve were given freedom of will. They had been given much, but all that the Lord had abundantly provided for them was not enough to prevent their breaking of God's will for their lives. This speaks to the nature of man, before even sin was passed on through the blood to all of Adam and

mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: ¹⁶ *And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.*

Lev. 16:30 *For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.*

Lev. 4:20 *And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.*

Lev. 5:10 *And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.*

7 Lev. 17:11 *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

Heb. 9:22 *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

Matt. 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

8 Gen. 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

Eve's descendants.⁹ Thus, even in man's innocent state, pleasing God was not his greatest desire when directly faced with the choice of pleasing self. When confronted with the option of whom they would obey, first Eve, and then Adam chose the desire to follow their own will and desires above being subject to God.¹⁰ It was apparently not enough to be blessed by God; instead, Adam and Eve ate of that which they were forbidden to eat, with the intention of being like God.¹¹ Yes, Satan had tempted them,¹² and it was his lie they believed,¹³ but it was not Satan who ate of the tree and disobeyed divine will—this was reserved for Adam and Eve.¹⁴ Faced with faith in God and obedience to God's Word, mankind, though innocent before this, chose to believe a voice, and surely not a divine one, whose message was completely contrary to that of their Creator. This still remains the greatest transgression of man: to both believe and embrace other voices in the world, especially man's own, above Him Who created man. The result of Adam and Eve's sin was that death was introduced into the entire human race. The principle of Genesis is as much true today as when it was first revealed—that he who rebels against divine commandment *shall die*. Sinning against the Lord is a very seri-

ous thing, and so much so that the soul that sins, through divine justice, must die.

If any desire forgiveness for sin, it is paramount that they understand that divine justice must be met before forgiveness can be granted. In short, there can be no true redemption without the upholding of God's justice. Thus, it is heavenly justice upon which the Lord's grace actually rests. For the Christian, the justice of God is met by Him Who knew no sin dying in the sinner's place.¹⁵

Ultimately, if there is no death or bloodshed, there can be no true remission or forgiveness for sin. *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission* (Heb. 9:22).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 9:22)
And without shedding of blood is no remission—"It is universally true that sin never has been, and never will be forgiven, except in connection with, and in virtue of the shedding of blood."

By this it is understood that it is not merely grace that saves a man, but there must also be the shedding of blood, which includes the death of the Atoner, for God's grace to be actually given. Hence at the very core of divine grace is the Lord's di-

9 Rom. 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

10 Gen. 3:6 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

11 Gen. 3:4-5 *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: ⁵For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

12 Gen. 1:3-4 *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

13 Gen. 3:5 *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

14 Gen. 3:6 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

15 II Cor. 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

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vine justice, which demands atonement for sin.¹⁶ For the Christian this is the death of the Son of God.¹⁷ For the sinner this is the death of himself. Grace then is not technically free, in the respect that for divine grace to be provided, blood must first pay sin's penalty. If this is not the death of the sinner, then it must be that of the Savior. It is also far too casual to imply that God nonchalantly washes away our sin,

when in fact grace cannot be shed until justice is satisfied. True, God's grace is freely given¹⁸ to sinners, but only because another has already paid its price. But if atonement was not made, and no blood was shed,¹⁹ ending in the death of the sacrifice, then it would prove impossible for the Lord's grace to either supersede or replace His justice—simply because grace and justice cannot compromise or cancel

16 Lev. 5:16 *And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.*

Lev. 4:3 *If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.*

Lev. 4:26 *And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.*

Lev. 4:31 *And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.*

Lev. 5:6 *And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.*

Lev. 5:16 *And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.*

Lev. 6:30 *And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.*

Lev. 8:15 *And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.*

Lev. 16:27 *And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.*

Num. 15:25 *And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance:*

Num. 15:28 *And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.*

II Chron. 29:24 *And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering; and the sin offering should be made for all Israel.*

17 Rom. 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. I Pet. 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

I Cor. 15:3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

Heb. 2:17 *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. I Pet. 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Isa. 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

Rom. 4:25 *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

18 Rom. 3:23–24 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

19 Heb. 9:22 *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

out the other. In the spiritual realm and in the mind of God, grace and justice must coexist, since both are part of the Lord's holy character; therefore, one could never be more esteemed or relied upon than the other. To do so would be to alter and change the very nature of God by inferring that He is only a God of grace and not equally a God of justice.²⁰

Ephesians 1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Forgiveness for the sinner is not an elementary act or something simple, as unbelievers will often imply. Hence, whereas many people wrongly assume that religion is for the unlearned and uneducated and that faith is crude, the real truth is that the salvation of man and his redemption from sin required a great degree of heavenly wisdom and prudence.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:8) In all wisdom—That is, he has evinced great wisdom in the plan of salvation; wisdom in so saving people as to secure the honor of his own law, and in devising a scheme that was eminently adapted to save people...

It took great heavenly wisdom and prudence on God's part to remain just in dealing with man's sin yet at the same time ultimately impart grace to him. And like a seed that needs to die in order for life and fruit to be produced,²¹ so does the death of the Son of God and His payment for sin²² result in sinners being provided the grace to be saved.²³ From death springs life, through which the Lord's justice is appeased and His grace is imparted. The plan of redemption therefore is not rudimentary, and the apostle hopes to impart this spiritual understanding to the saints at Ephesus—that they are actually saved because of the heavenly wisdom of God.

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will. The entire plan of salvation was a *mystery*, which the Lord previously kept hidden within Himself. It was not something that could either be known or anticipated by man. This is evidenced by when the prophets of old were unable to determine the time between the events of Christ's suffering and of His entering

20 Ps. 89:14 *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.* Deut. 32:4 *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*

Ps. 33:5 *He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.*

Job 37:23 *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.*

Jer. 23:5 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*

21 John 12:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

22 1 Pet. 2:24 *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Rom. 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

1 Pet. 3:18 *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

Gal. 3:13 *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

23 Eph. 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

Tit. 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

II Tim. 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

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into His glory. Ultimately the mystery of God's plan to save man through His Son lay between the death of the Savior and the final glories that will follow Him, which He will usher in. *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* (I Pet. 1:10–11).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Pet. 1:10) *And searched diligently*—ἐξερευνᾶω *exereunaō*. Compare Daniel 9:2–3.²⁴ The word used here means to search out, to trace out, to explore. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament, though one of the words from which this is compounded (ἐρευνᾶω *ereunaō*) occurs. See John 5:39,²⁵ (Notes) John 7:52; Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Revelation 2:23.²⁶ The idea is, that they perceived that in their communications there were some great and glorious truths which they did not fully comprehend, and that they diligently employed their natural faculties to understand that which they were appointed to impart to succeeding generations.

The English word *mystery* is the Greek word #3466 *mystérion*. The word is defined by *Strong's Lexicon* as “a mystery or secret doctrine.” Its usage is “a mystery, secret, of which initiation is necessary.” *HELPS Word-studies* states, “‘Mystery’ (3466 /*mystérion*) is not something un-

knowable. Rather, it is what can only be known through revelation, i.e. because God reveals it.”

According to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. In these words lie the cause of all God's blessings purposed for man. Hence, all that we have read and will read regarding the believer's salvation and the earth's restoration can be traced to the good pleasure of God's will. Practically, men are saved and purposed for heavenly habitation simply because it was according to God's good pleasure that they should be. None counseled the Lord on this great and consequential subject, nor was there any outside influence that caused God to give such a manifold gift. In short, the only cause and source of the redemption, salvation, and glorification of man is the Lord's own good will.

An element of the *wisdom of God* contained in the *mystery* of God was designed for the saints' glory. *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory* (I Cor. 2:7).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 2:7) *Unto our glory*—In order that we might be honored or glorified. This may refer either to the honor which was put upon Christians in this life, in being admitted to the privileges of the sons of God; or more probably to that “eternal weight of glory” which remains for

²⁴ Dan. 9:2–3 *In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. ³And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:*

²⁵ John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

²⁶ John 7:52 *They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

Rom. 8:27 *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

I Cor. 2:10 *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

Rev. 2:23 *And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

them in heaven; 2 Corinthians 4:17.²⁷ One design of that plan was to raise the redeemed to “glory, and honor, and immortality.”

The Lord’s hidden plan, and that which He kept secret until the appointed time, was not solely the glorification of His Son²⁸ but also the glorification of His Son’s people,²⁹ those souls whom God has purposed that Christ should save and will ultimately be glorified both through and with Him. *And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me* (Heb. 2:13).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Heb. 2:13) Behold I and the children, &c.— (Isa 8:18).³⁰ “Sons” (Heb 2:10),³¹ “brethren” (Heb 2:12),³² and “children,” imply His right and property in them from everlasting. He speaks of them as “children” of God, though not yet in being, yet considered as such in His purpose, and presents them before God the Father, who has given Him them, to be glorified with Himself.

For believers to be redeemed, through the blood, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, and become glorified through Him, is the greatest secret and or mystery ever revealed to man, a mystery that can be truly known and perceived only through spiritual initiation. And though elements of God’s plan to save man were known in the Old Testament,

the full and detailed blueprint of salvation was not. Equally true is that just as the plan of salvation was hidden in God and remained a mystery before it was revealed, so also were those whom the Lord purposed to save a hidden secret in the mind of the Lord—so much so that if their redemption and Christ’s glorification were truly known, then those orchestrating Jesus’ death would never have crucified the Lord of glory. *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory* (I Cor. 2:8).

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 2:8) For had they known it—Had they fully understood his character, and seen the wisdom of his plan, and his work, they would not have put him to death...

Ironically, the one, Whom the Romans crucified and hoped to be done away with actually became—because of His resurrection from the dead—more exalted, and as a result even more followers and adherents were added to His church. Hence, if both the Jews and Romans thought that Jesus was a threat to their religious and governmental positions during His life, then after His death and His glorification by God, they feared Him and His followers even more. For by their crucifying the

27 II Cor. 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

28 Phil. 2:9-11 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Heb. 2:7 *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:**

29 Col. 3:4 *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

II Thess. 2:14 *Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**

30 Isa. 8:18 *Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.*

31 Heb. 2:10 *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

32 Heb. 2:12 *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*

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Son of God, the Lord actually created even more sons of God through Him.³³

To be lord of anything implies having or holding power over that which is mentioned. When the subject is glory, then it is inferred that not only was Jesus glorified but also through Him all the future glory of God will be revealed. Understandably, those who will be glorified through the *Lord of glory* are only those who have possessed a deep and sincere faith in Him.³⁴

Ephesians 1:10 *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

This verse actually begins with the Greek word #1519 εἰς (*eis*). Used primarily as a preposition, *Strong's Lexicon* defines it as “to or into (indicating the point reached or entered, of place, time, fig. purpose, result).” *HELPS Word-studies* defines *eis* “(a preposition)—properly, *into (unto)*—literally, ‘*motion into which*’ implying *penetration* (‘unto,’ ‘union’) to a particular *purpose or result*.” Barnes states regard-

ing the word, “The meaning here is, that this plan was formed in order (εἰς *eis*) or ‘unto’ this end, that in the full arrangement of times, or in the arrangements completing the filling up of the times, God might gather together in one all things.”³⁵ The final result of this plan, which lay stretched out from the beginning of the world and is still yet to be finished, is the Lord’s gathering *together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*.

Gather together in one all things in Christ. It is Jesus Who is to be the agent, Whom the Lord purposed beforehand should bring everything separated from Him into one under Him.³⁶ In the Son of God then is the reconciliation of the entire world. Through the power given to Christ by God will God unify and bring together all things, ultimately comprising one large empire, which Scripture reveals as the *kingdom of God*.³⁷ Understandably it will be He Who will rule the world, Whose own life redeemed it. But this will take place only when *the fullness of times* has been completed. In the book of Daniel, Daniel spoke of the Gentile kingdoms,³⁸ which were purposed to precede

33 I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, John 1:12–13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Gal. 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

34 Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

35 Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:10

36 I Cor. 15:24–28 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. ²⁷For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. ²⁸And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

II Thess. 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

37 Luke 13:29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

38 The first kingdom (Babylonian Empire) Dan. 2:31–32 Thou, O king, sawest, and beheld a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. ³²This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

the coming heavenly kingdom, which Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will rule. In our day and time we can in hindsight observe Daniel's prophecy as having already been fulfilled, evidenced by many kings and kingdoms that have sought to bring into one the nations and peoples of the earth. Yet none of them, as history records, who were revealed either in Daniel's prophecy or outside of it have been successful, simply because none have possessed the sufficient earthly power and resources to reach their desired end. Ultimately all the great Gentile powers that preceded Jesus' first coming (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome) were only weak demonstrations of the power that will be exerted by the Son of God and the powerful kingdom that He will usher in. Christ's kingdom therefore will exceed each and every great military power previously observed in the earth. And whereas historians love to speak of the might of Rome and its expansiveness, plus the great influence it has left on the earth, Jesus' kingdom will dwarf not only Rome's power and worldly influence but also all previous Gentile powers that preceded it. Hence, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus the Great, Alexander, and the five Julio-Claudian dynasties, represented by the first five Roman emperors (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero), will pale in comparison, even if their powers somehow were able to be united collectively. Practically, what man cannot do in unifying the earth under one great universal and

appointed head—God can. *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever* (Rev. 11:15). Barnes adds some illuminating thoughts on this verse:

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rev. 11:15) According to the common reading, the sense is, that all the kingdoms of the earth, being many in themselves, had been now brought under the one scepter of Christ; according to the other, the whole world was regarded as in fact one kingdom—that of Satan—and the scepter had now passed from his hands into those of the Saviour.

Whereas Satan and his evil influence over worldly kingdoms were made visible by the rise of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, which were also purposed by the devil for worldly domination and subjugation but could never fully accomplish their aim, at the return of the Son of God to the earth, Christ's power will be able to accomplish what no Gentile or other worldly power could. Jesus Christ, by the power invested in Him by God, will bring all things under God. Hence, whereas Satan repeatedly endeavored to conquer and gain complete control over the earth but has repeatedly failed, the Son of God, Who now represents God's heavenly power and might,³⁹ will succeed. What sinners and Satan attempted to do but could not because of their very limited abilities, the Lord and His Christ

The second kingdom (Medo-Persian Empire) *Dan. 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

The third kingdom (Greek Empire) *Dan. 2:39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.*

The fourth kingdom (Roman Empire) *Dan. 2:40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.*

39 *Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Col. 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

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will do. The gathering of Christ's church,⁴⁰ of which saints are now members,⁴¹ is but one instance of how through divine power God will through His Son gather all things unto Himself, with the final and climactic result of all creation again being subject to God.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Eph. 1:10) God's purpose is to sum up the whole creation in Christ, the Head of angels, with whom He is linked by His invisible nature, and of men with whom He is linked by His humanity; of Jews and Gentiles; of the living and the dead (Eph 3:15);⁴² of animate and inanimate creation. Sin has disarranged the creature's relation of subordination to God.

The Lord's purpose in His Son is such that in conjunction with He Whom God first made the world,⁴³ He will then also reconcile the entire creation through Him. And as Jesus had a role in God's original creation,⁴⁴ so will the world also through Him be restored. What this teaches us is this: that Jesus Christ and the earth as we now know it are eternally bound, and that just as Christ had a role in this world's first creation, so will He also play the dominant role in the world's final reformation. The Son of God therefore

was never an afterthought in God's plan to save man and restore creation; rather, because He was with God during the original creation, so will He be the main agent in its final reformation. We can also safely say that the entire world and its earthly inhabitants have always been directly linked to their final Redeemer. Hence, Jesus is not an outsider to this world, nor one who entered the world as a foreigner, without previous connection to it. Rather, Jesus, God's only begotten Son, has always been involved in the history of man and as such has always been purposed to play the key and dominant role in humankind's final end.

Gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. The ultimate end revealed in the *mystery* of God is God's eternal purpose to bring all things in both heaven, and on the earth, which have been separated from Him, under one supreme universal head. This includes all angelic beings in heaven as well as all human souls, who are either in heaven⁴⁵ or remain on the earth.

For continued emphasis we have added numerous respected commentaries on

40 *I Thess. 4:16-17* For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

41 *Rom. 12:5* So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. *I Cor. 12:18* But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. *I Cor. 12:27* Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Eph. 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

42 *Eph. 3:15* Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

43 *John 1:1-3* In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Col. 1:15-16 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Heb. 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

44 *John 1:10* He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

45 *Heb. 12:23* To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

the important subject of the Lord gathering together all things into one under His Son, that through God's Son the Lord will gather and make into one a single heavenly kingdom and ultimately sum up the whole of creation in Christ. It was for this purpose that Christ was sent into the world, and for this purpose that He will return to it.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Eph. 1:10) That he might gather together in one all things in Christ.—In these words St. Paul strikes the great keynote of the whole Epistle, the UNITY OF ALL IN CHRIST. The expression “to gather together in one” is the same which is used in Romans 13:9 (where all commandments are said to be “briefly comprehended,” or summed up, “in

the one saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”).⁴⁶ Here, however, there is the additional idea that this gathering up is “for Himself.” The full meaning of this expression is “to gather again under one head” things which had been originally one, but had since been separated.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:10) In Christ—By means of Christ, or under him, as the great head and king. He is to be the great agent in effecting this, and he is to preside over this united kingdom. In accordance with this view the heavenly inhabitants, the angels as well as the redeemed, are uniformly represented as uniting in the same worship, and as acknowledging the Redeemer as their common head and king; Revelation 5:9–12.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Rom. 13:9 *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

⁴⁷ Rev. 5:9–12 *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*¹⁰ *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

¹¹ *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;*¹² *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 3

Ephesians 1:11–14

Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

THE Greek word *inheritance* is #2820 *kléroó*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word as “to assign by lot.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “properly, make a choice when assisted by casting lots.” *HELPS Word-studies* also states that “The Greek text literally reads, ‘In whom (Christ), indeed we were lot-cast.’” Just as Israel was brought into inheritance by lot, so are Christians, by lot, given right to heaven. It is solely through divine will, and God choosing men for His own purposes, that heavenly inheritance is available.¹ Ultimately it is those whom God has provided a lot in heaven who will inherit heaven.² “Predestination is not an exception to God’s usual way of working; he works, or works out (ἐνεργούτος) all

things on the same principle, according to the decision to which his will comes.”³

(*Matthew Poole’s Commentary*, Eph. 1:11) *Have obtained an inheritance*; are called, or brought into the participation of an inheritance, or have a right given us to it as by lot: in allusion to the twelve tribes having, in the division of the land of Canaan, their inheritances assigned them by lot. He shows that they did not first seek it, much less deserve it, but God cast it upon them: their lot fell in the heavenly inheritance, when others did not.

If there is one great truth about the importance of predestination and election, it is this: if men are not saved in this way, then they cannot be saved at all. The reason is that man on his own, and through his own character, merit, or worldly works, is unworthy of eternal inheritance. Because there are *none righteous, no not one*, and *none that doeth good, no, not one*, if God did not choose to save some through divine choice, then none either would or could be saved at all. At the

1 *II Tim. 1:9* Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

2 *I Pet. 1:2* Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

II Thess. 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: *I Thess. 1:4* Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

Col. 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

Acts 13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

3 *Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 1:11

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base of all heavenly salvation rests the divine principle of election, without which the salvation of any sinner is impossible.⁴ To debate this truth, that salvation is by divine choice, then human reason and emotion must be used, since the truth of God's Word cannot be.

Practically, there are but two ways for a man to be found fit for heaven: either he has merited it, and it is by debt, or God has purposed it, and it is through grace. In Scripture works and merit are set in direct contrast with election and grace. Thus, if no man has the merits to be saved on his own, then only the Lord's election of him, which is an act of heavenly grace, actually can. Since human merit is an insufficient cause or reason for salvation, then only divine purpose can produce it. Hence, if man cannot be saved on his own, through himself, then only if God chooses to save him can he be.

Scripture contains an abundant amount of examples whereby through divine choice God's will is accomplished on the earth. This is seen in Jerusalem being chosen to be God's holy city, to then bear God's name, as well as David being preordained to be a leader over the Lord's chosen people, Israel.⁵ Abraham also had divine election to thank as the reason that through him all the nations of

the earth would be blessed.⁶ Pharaoh, an evil ruler, was raised up by the Lord, so that through him the Lord could reveal that His power was able to subdue and ultimately destroy even the most rebellious of men.⁷ Hence, not only are men through predestination blessed by God, but also the wicked are used and preordained to assist in the Lord's purposes being accomplished on the earth. Jesus also said in respect to His disciples that it was not they who had chosen Him, but He, Who had chosen them and ordained them to both eternal life and service for Himself. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you* (John 15:16).

(Geneva Study Bible, John 15:16) These words plainly teach us that our salvation comes only from the favour and gracious goodness of the everlasting God towards us, and of nothing that we do or can deserve.

One of the most revealing records of divine choice as the reason for blessing is found in God's love for Jacob over Esau, before either child had even been born. *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election*

4 Rom. 3:10–20 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: ¹⁴Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵Their feet are swift to shed blood: ¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their ways: ¹⁷And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸There is no fear of God before their eyes. ¹⁹Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

5 II Chron. 6:6 *But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.*

6 Gen. 12:1–3 *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: ²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

7 Exod. 9:16 *And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.*

might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated (Rom. 9:11-13). God's selection of Jacob came before either he or Esau had been conceived, before also either had done either good or evil (v. 11). Jacob's blessing came to him from the Lord, not because of anything in Jacob, for before birth he was the exact same as his brother; rather all that Jacob inherited from God had as its sole source divine providence. What was true of Jacob is likewise true of the church, that saints have been saved and purposed for heaven, not because of anything that they have done but only because it is the will of God that they should be saved and eternally inherit what the Lord has purposed for them.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance. It is through the Son of God that men are made to become the children of God, which then establishes their right to receive a heavenly and spiritual inheritance through Him. It is not simply that Christians have gained an inheritance through election but that through Christ, and in Him, they have become God's own heritage, which is actually the grounds for inheritance. The *in whom* in this verse refers to the Son of God, for it is in Him and through Him alone that heavenly inheritance is available.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 1:11) *Even in him*—in whom we were also made his inheritance. This is the literal rendering of ἐκκληρώθημεν, and it is more expressive than the A.V., “In whom also we have ob-

tained an inheritance.” God taking us for his own heritage involves more than our getting an inheritance from God (see Deuteronomy 4:20...⁸

Deuteronomy 32:9 For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

(*Benson Commentary*, Deut. 32:9) *The Lord's portion is his people*—Highly prized and loved by him, Exodus 19:5-6.⁹ As if he had said, The Israelites are that portion of mankind whom God was pleased to redeem out of bondage, and to make his peculiar people. It is no wonder, therefore, that he has so great a regard for them, and takes special care of them.

It is not simply that believers have received and obtained something from the Lord, but more importantly they have been made through divine election to be the Lord's. The principle therefore upon which Christians have been given an inheritance in heaven is because that have been made the children of heaven. Since they have been chosen by the Lord, it is not difficult to understand why Christians will share in all that is His. Since *the LORD's portion is his people*, why should it ever surprise any that believers are given a part, a lot, or portion of all that God is and possesses? Because saints are the Lord's chosen, as with Jacob, then it is not a great leap to perceive why He has so abundantly blessed them. The truth also is that it would be far more odd and strange if the Lord did not bless those He has chosen to be His own, simply because being made a son of God¹⁰ provides by divine right the opportunity to share with

⁸ Deut. 4:20 *But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.*

⁹ Exod. 19:5-6 *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: ⁶And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

¹⁰ I John 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

Gal. 3:26 *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

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God. Thus, all the Lord has made to be His own through spiritual regeneration¹¹ will share with Him in heaven. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together* (Rom. 8:16–17).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Rom. 8:17) One characteristic of the son is that he is his father's heir. So it is with the Christian. He, too, has an inheritance—an inheritance of glory which he will share with Christ.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 8:17) *Then heirs*—That is, he will treat us as sons. An heir is one who succeeds to an estate. The meaning here is, that if we sustain the relation of sons to God, that we shall be treated as such, and admitted to share his favors.

Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The Greek word for the English phrase *who worketh* is #1754 *energeō*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word as “to be at work, to work, to do.” Its usage is “I work, am operative, am at work, am made to work, accomplish; mid: I work, display activity.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines *energeō* “properly, *energize*, working in a situation which brings it from one stage (point) to the next, like an electrical current *energizing* a wire, bringing it to a *shining light bulb*.” From these defini-

tions it is clear that the election of those purposed for heaven is but one instance and but one example of God's universal agency in creation. Whereas it is often thought that God is a bystander in His creation, the truth is that He is actually a very active and dynamic participant in both its direction and oversight.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 1:11) *Of him who worketh all things*—Of God, the universal agent. The affirmation here is not merely that God accomplishes the designs of salvation according to the counsel of his own will, but that “he does everything.” His agency is not confined to one thing, or to one class of objects. Every object and event is under his control, and is in accordance with his eternal plan. The word rendered “worketh”—*ἐνεργέω energeō*—means to work, to be active, to produce; Ephesians 1:20; Galatians 2:8; Philippians 2:13.¹² A universal agency is ascribed to him. “The same God which ‘worketh’ all in all;” 1 Corinthians 12:6. He has an agency in causing the emotions of our hearts. “God, who worketh in you both to Will and to do of his good pleasure;” Philippians 2:13. He has an agency in distributing to people their various allotments and endowments. “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will;” 1 Corinthians 12:11.

Just as the Spirit of God works in the hearts and souls of men to carry out His own will and good pleasure,¹³ so does He through divine power accomplish the very same thing throughout creation. If God were not actively at work to lead sin-

11 Tit. 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

I John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

12 Eph. 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Gal. 2:8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

Phil. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

13 Phil. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

ners back to Himself,¹⁴ then none would even have an interest in or an affection for the higher and holy spiritual realm of the Spirit. It is thus not simply that the Lord saves men¹⁵ but that He also so works in their hearts that they develop a deep and persistent desire to be saved. Whenever penitents turn to the Lord or come to possess greater faith in Him, you can be sure that the divine Holy Spirit was involved in their conversion. *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul (Acts 16:14).*

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Acts 16:14) The Lord opened; this was the Lord's work; according unto what our Saviour himself had said, John 6:44, No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. ... Otherwise creating a clean heart within us,

as it is called, Psalm 51:10,¹⁶ is beyond the power of nature.

Ultimately it is the Lord and the Holy Spirit Whom He impresses on believers' hearts Who is at work prompting heavenly conversion,¹⁷ imparting healing,¹⁸ bringing joy,¹⁹ peace, and love,²⁰ and enlightening the spiritually blind to the wonders and glories of the spiritual realm.²¹

It should not be surprising that God has the ability to actively conform all things according to His own will—if we consider that it was He Who first created everything.²² What is actually harder also: to govern what you have made or to create it in the first place? To use a weak analogy, it is much easier to drive a car and maintain the direction it should go than it is to engineer and manufacture the car. The same could be said of anything cre-

14 John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

15 I Tim. 4:10 *For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*

II Tim. 1:9 *Who [God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

16 Ps. 51:10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

17 Luke 1:17 *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

18 Acts 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

Luke 4:18 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*

19 Rom. 15:13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

20 Gal. 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

21 Heb. 2:4 *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

I Cor. 2:10-12 *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

22 Gen. 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

Isa. 45:12 *I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.*

Rev. 4:11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

Jer. 32:17 *Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:*

ated—that to influence it to comply with divine will is vastly easier than creating it in the first place. If God has done the first in creating the heavens and earth, then it is surely not difficult for Him to do the second, bringing about His will to be accomplished throughout them. This is why it never should surprise any that God has the supernatural ability to work out His own divine will throughout creation, once it is understood that actually bringing the heavens and earth into existence was a much more difficult and daunting task than now ruling them.

It is worth noting that the entirety of creation and all it entails was created not only by God but also for God, that all things were created not only by the Lord but even more importantly and impressively, for Him. *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him* (Col. 1:16). Because creation is the Lord's work, produced by the agency of His own hands,²³ then it should not surprise us that its primary purpose is to conform to the Lord's own divine will.

(Benson Commentary, Col. 1:16) All things were created by him and for him—They are the productions of his unsearchable wisdom and almighty power, and were made by him, that he might possess and govern them, and be glorified in and by them.

Just as creation was formed for the glory of God, so also are those called by His name, and made to become His sons, purposed to manifest forth the Lord's glory. There is hardly a more comforting and encouraging section of Scripture than what is revealed in the opening verses of

Isaiah 43, which reveal that those called by God's name, who have been made His sons, have been created for the Lord's own glory. It is also here we see that those whom God has created and formed, He has promised to remain with, to accomplish His final will for their lives. *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him* (Isa. 43:1–7).

What is said of Jacob and Israel also is true of *every one that is called by my* [the Lord's] *name*, that all those called by the Lord have been *created and formed* (v. 1) for *my* [the Lord's] *glory* (v. 7). To be called by God's name is another way of describing that one has been made a son of God.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 43:7) Every one that is called by my name—To be called by the name of anyone, is synonymous with being regarded as his son, since a son bears

²³ Isa. 45:12 *I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.*

the name of his father (see Isaiah 44:5; Isaiah 48:1).²⁴ The expression, therefore, means here, all who were regarded as the children of God; and the promise is, that all such should be re-gathered to their own land.

For I have created him—(See the note at Isaiah 43:1²⁵).

For my glory—In order to show forth, and illustrate my glory. They shall be, therefore, defended and protected; and my glory shall be shown in their recovery and salvation.

(Geneva Study Bible, Isa. 43:7) *Even every one that is called by my {g} name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; verily, I have made him.*

(g) Meaning that he could not be unmindful of them, unless he would neglect his own Name and glory.

What is undoubtedly true and without question in Scripture is that those created by God and made to become His sons²⁶ have been purposed to manifest forth His glory, that those who have been redeemed and have been brought from death unto life²⁷ are purposed to reveal the celestial and divine glory of their Redeemer. What is true of Christians is also true of every-

thing the Lord has by divine, supernatural power brought forth into existence.

Romans 11:36 (NLT) *For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 11:36) *Of him, and through him, and to him.*—All things proceed from God, all things are made or wrought by Him, and all things exist for His glory, and to carry out His ends.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Rom. 11:36) *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; i.e. all things are of him, as the efficient cause; through him, as the disposing cause; to him, as the final cause. They are of him, without any other motive; through him, without any assistance; and to him, without any other end, i.e. for his sake alone.*

Once we have come to understand Whom creation is for, that it was created for the Lord, then it is much easier to understand why the Lord has the supreme right and authority to govern it as He wills. Since all of creation was brought into existence *for Him*, then who is man to question anything that is revealed as God's will

24 Isa. 44:5 *One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.*

Isa. 48:1 *Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.*

25 Isa. 43:1 *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.*

26 II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Eph. 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

I John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

27 John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

I John 3:14 *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

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and God's choice being done through-out it? Who also has the right to speak against divine will being exercised upon the earth if creation was designed for the Lord's own glory? It was never the intention of God that creation was made for man but rather that both creation and man were made for God. God was never purposed to be at the disposal of man's will, but he, God's.

The microscopic level at which God is in control of His creatures' destiny is seen when things that seem even to be random chance turn out as the Lord has both willed and purposed. The book of Proverbs speaks of the unique and intricate involvement that the Lord has in the lives of not only the saved but also the unsaved: *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD* (Prov. 16:33).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Prov. 16:33) *The lot is cast into the lap ...* — In other words, much that we attribute to chance is due to the providence of God.

(*Geneva Study Bible*, Prov. 16:33) So that there is nothing that ought to be attributed

to fortune: for all things are determined in the counsel of God which will come to pass.

Examples of *casting lots* are numerous in Scripture.²⁸ This process was often evidenced when saints in the Old Testament, before the Holy Spirit was given, were uncertain in determining divine will. Some of the most prominent examples include Aaron and the Levitical priests casting lots on the days of atonement to determine which goat would represent the Lord and which would be sent to Azazel.²⁹ The promised land also was divided by lots.³⁰ Those on the ship with Jonah cast lots to determine his fate.³¹ An example in the New Testament of casting lots is when the apostles did so to determine that Matthias would be numbered with them as an apostle after Judas' betrayal and death.³² Hence, even what most would consider random chance, Scripture reveals comes under the sovereign and universal government of God. To use a modern-day example, if the Lord can even determine the roll of the dice, then nothing in creation is due to either random chance or blind luck—simply because the Lord is actively and effectually at work to work out all things, to conform them to His

28 Josh. 18:10 *And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.*

Matt. 27:35 *And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.* Luke 1:9 *According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.*

Ezek. 45:1 *Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about.*

Ezek. 47:22 *And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.*

29 Lev. 16:8 *And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*

Lev. 16:10 *But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.*

30 Josh. 18:6 *Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God.*

31 Jnh. 1:7 *And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.*

32 Acts 1:26 *And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

own proper and divine will. This reality is so contrary to when sinners foolishly presume that God is removed from His creation, as well as the earth and its inhabitants' destiny, that God has somehow removed Himself from the world's events when actually it is He, Who is overseeing and divinely escorting it to its final end.³³

Ephesians 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

That we should be to the praise of his glory. The *we* in this verse is in reference to those who will be gathered together by Christ (v. 10) and who by divine will and providence have been given an inheritance in heaven (v. 11). It is thus the body of Christ,³⁴ and the spiritual and heavenly inheritance that is given to it, that has been ultimately purposed to redound and bring praise to God.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:12) That we should be to the praise of his glory—*Should be the occasion or the means of celebrating his glory; or that praise should be ascribed to him as the result of our salvation.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also

after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

It was *in whom* the Ephesians had *trusted* and *in whom* they had *believed*, Jesus Christ (v. 12), Who produced their being *sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*. Because of their trust in the Lord Jesus, the Ephesians were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who established and confirmed that they had been made to become God's sons.³⁵ There are none, nor will there ever be any, who are given the *Holy Spirit* who did not first place their trust in the very One whom God had beforehand determined should send forth the Spirit.³⁶ It was Jesus Who proclaimed that He would send the Spirit from the Father, and He, after His resurrection, Who continues baptizing believers with the Holy Spirit today.³⁷

It is through receiving the Holy Spirit, Who is given to those who have placed their trust in the Son of God, which ultimately reveals that they have been favored by God. There is therefore no greater proof of coming into God's favor than when by grace the Holy Spirit is given to believers. To actually possess the Spirit is the first critical piece of evidence that a man has been divinely favored by the

33 Isa. 45:7 *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.* Isa. 45:12-13 *I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.* ¹³*I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.*

34 Rom. 12:5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

I Cor. 12:18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

I Cor. 12:27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

Eph. 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

35 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

36 John 14:25-26 *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.* ²⁶*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

37 John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

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Lord. There is no greater heavenly gift³⁸ that can be given, than that which confirms spiritual sonship, and provides hope of sharing with Christ in the heavens. By possessing the *Spirit of promise*, it is both validated and confirmed that saints have the spiritual standing of being designated as the *children of promise*,³⁹ those also who through promise⁴⁰ have been adopted to become the children of God. It is ultimately through faith that men receive the Spirit⁴¹ and through possession of the Spirit that they are confirmed to be the true children of God.⁴²

Sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. The proof that a man has placed his trust in the Son of God and thereby been made a child of God himself is when he is sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. For anything to be legitimate and proven as genuine, there must be some way to authenticate

it. For the Christian, his being provided evidence that he has been made a son of God is by his being given the Holy Spirit. It is through possession of this Spirit that a man is sealed as a true child of God. The Greek word for sealed is #4972 *sphragizó*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word, “properly, to seal (affix) with a signet ring or other instrument to stamp (a roller or seal), i.e. to attest ownership, authorizing (validating) what is sealed.” To be sealed by God with the Holy Spirit is the proof of belonging to God. So important is the Spirit in authenticating the true sons of God that it is revealed in Scripture that if a man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Rom. 8:9). If any have not the Spirit of Christ, then they should not in any way

38 Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 10:45 *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

39 Rom. 9:8 *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

40 Joel 2:28–29 *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: ²⁹And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.*

Ezek. 36: 26–27 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

Acts 2:17–18 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*

Luke 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Matt. 3:11–12 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: ¹²Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

Acts 2:33 *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

41 Gal. 3:14 *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Eph. 1:13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

42 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Rom. 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Rom. 8:16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

or in any measure think themselves to have any true relationship with God. It is the Holy Spirit alone Who confirms spiritual sonship, without which no man can be reckoned as a son of God—so that if a man has not the Spirit of God's Son, then he is without question not God's, and God is not truly his. Hence, just as the Holy Spirit is proof of being counted as a child of God, the absence of the Holy Spirit certifies that there is no true connection with the Father or the higher, heavenly, and spiritual realm of Him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 8:9) Is none of his—Is not a Christian. This is a test of piety that is easily applied; and this settles the question. If a man is not influenced by the meek, pure, and holy spirit of the Lord Jesus, if he is not conformed to his image, if his life does not resemble that of the Saviour, he is a stranger to religion. No test could be more easily applied, and none is more decisive. It matters not what else he may have. He may be loud in his professions, amiable in his temper, bold in his zeal, or active in promoting the interests of his own party or denomination in the church; but if he has not the temper of the Saviour, and does not manifest his Spirit, it is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Rom. 8:9) When he saith such a one is none of Christ's, he means, that he doth not peculiarly belong to Christ, he hath no special interest in him, is no true member of him. As a merchant sets his seal upon his goods, so doth Christ his Spirit upon his followers ...

Just as the Holy Spirit of promise confirms both spiritual sonship and heavenly inheritance, so also does His absence reveal that a man does not have any true relationship with either the Father or the Son, simply because all who have been reckoned as God's true sons will possess

within themselves the internal evidence that they are God's and God is theirs. This is proven by the Spirit of Christ being sent into their hearts.⁴³

Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The Holy Spirit is that pledge, that *earnest* of our inheritance, which is to remain with believers and be their possession until the full and complete redemption of their bodies. The Greek word for *earnest* is #728 *arrabón*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word, "an earnest (a part payment in advance for security)." *HELPS Word-studies* defines *arrabón* as, "properly, an installment; a deposit ('down-payment') which guarantees the balance (the full purchase-price) ... *arrhabón* ('down-payment pledge') is the regular term in NT times for 'earnest-money,' i.e. advance-payment that guarantees the rest will be given. 728 (*arrhabón*) then represents full security backed by the purchaser who supplies sufficient proof they will fulfill the entire pledge (promise)."

Until the redemption of the purchased possession. The redemption spoken of, which the Scripture reveals has already been *purchased*, is that full and complete redemption of the believer's mortal and earthly body from sin. It is this full redemption that all those saved by Christ now expectantly wait for. *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body* (Rom. 8:23).

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 8:23) The adoption.—The Christian who has received the gift of the Spirit is al-

⁴³ Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

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ready an adopted child of God. (See Romans 8:15–16.)⁴⁴ But this adoption still has to be ratified and perfected, which will not be until the Coming of Christ.

The redemption of our body.—One sign of the imperfect sonship of the Christian is that mortal and corruptible body in which the better and heavenly part of him is imprisoned. That, too, shall be transformed and glorified, and cleared from all the defect of its earthly condition. (Comp. 1 Corinthians 15:49–53; 2 Corinthians 5:1 et seq.; Philipians 3:21.)⁴⁵

It is not only that the Lord completely renews and refreshes the hearts of those saved but also that through divine power the believer's body will be fully emancipated from sin. *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself* (Phil. 3:21). At the second coming of Jesus Christ, when He returns to gather the bodies of the saved, whose natural and earthly bodies are referred to as *vile* bodies and bodies of humiliation, then the universal power of God

given to the Son will be fully known and recognized. The Greek word for *vile* is #5014 *tapeinósís*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines it as “low estate, humiliation.” The *Strong's Lexicon* also states in respect to the word that *tapeinoo* means “depression (in rank or feeling)—humiliation, be made low, low estate, vile.” Though saints are saved, still their earthly bodies remain the exact same as the lost and unredeemed bodies of sinners around them. This will not remain so once Jesus Christ returns to the earth to complete the full salvation and redemption of those redeemed by Him. It will also be when believers' vile and humiliated bodies are transformed to resemble Christ's own glorified body,⁴⁶ which will manifest the highest tribute to and bring the greatest praise to God's name.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 1:14) *To the praise of his glory.* For the third time in this paragraph, these or similar words are introduced. In this place the precise meaning is that the consummation of redemption will be the highest tribute to God's glory—his infinite excellence will be wonderfully manifested thereby.

44 Rom. 8:15–16 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* ¹⁶*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

45 1 Cor. 15:49–53 *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

⁵⁰*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* ⁵¹*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* ⁵²*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* ⁵³*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

II Cor. 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Phil. 3:21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

46 I John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

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Ephesians 1:15–20

Ephesians 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

As with all the other churches the apostle applauded,¹ faith in the Son of God and love toward those born of God were the two greatest evidences of the Ephesians' religious piety. To genuinely believe in Jesus Christ will result in being given the Spirit of God, from whom the divine fruits of *faith* and *love* become manifest in the life. Where true faith is, love will follow; where love is, genuine faith in the Son of God has preceded it. Where also God's Spirit truly abides, His fruit will manifest itself in those who possess Him. Counterfeits—though they may copy religious verbiage and possess some knowledge of Scripture—cannot truly

mimic the fruits of the Spirit,² *faith* and *love*, which themselves are divine evidences of having become a child of God. Jesus said, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them* (Matt. 7:20). If this truth is applicable at the last day, when all will be judged, it surely should be applied to our present day, when spiritual discernment is needed most, in determining who is truly the Lord's and who is not.³

Ephesians 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

It is common for those in the faith, to give thanks and offer prayers for others who are also sincere believers in Jesus Christ.⁴ Being thankful in Christian ministry⁵ is as essential as being faithful. Just as faith

1 Col. 1:4 *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, I Thess. 1:3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;*

2 I Thess. 1:3 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*

3 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

4 Matt. 7:21–23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

5 Rom. 1:8–9 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. ⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;*

6 I Cor. 1:4 *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; Phil. 1:3–4 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,*

7 Col. 1:3 *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

8 Eph. 5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; I Thess. 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

9 Col. 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

10 Ps. 107:1 *O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

and love were evidences of the Ephesians' religious piety, so were Paul's thankfulness and prayer for them evidences of his own. Ministers also, even if no one else is thankful for true saints' lives, will be. The apostle's prayers for the Ephesians reveals that if even absent from the saints, still, spiritual labor in the form of prayer can be exerted toward them. To pray for someone reveals both a belief in God, that He answers prayer, and a selflessness not to be too overly concerned with our own lives. True Christians are, for the most part, rare,⁶ and this is why the apostle needed little motivation to lift up to God prayers and thanks for the saints at Ephesus. They were precious in the Lord's sight, and the apostle knew it. Similar with Israel, those chosen by God to share in divine inheritance are cherished in His sight.⁷

Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

After speaking of offering prayers for the Ephesians, Paul now reveals the contents of his prayers. The first thing the apostle beseeches *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory* for is that the believers at Ephesus may be given *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*. Though the Ephesians had already been baptized by the

Son of God with the Spirit, evidenced by bearing His divine fruits, still they lacked much that was necessary to truly come to know God. This knowledge, a true and deep knowledge of God, can come only through being given spiritual *wisdom and revelation*. Because God is Spirit (John 4:24),⁸ only His own Holy Spirit can truly make Himself known. Hence, just as Moses could not see the Lord's glory without having it to be revealed unto him, so cannot Christians truly come to know the Lord and His purpose for their lives apart from spiritual wisdom and revelation being imparted to them.

The two qualities connected to the Holy Spirit that the apostle prays may be imparted to the Ephesians are *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*. The Greek word for *wisdom* is #4678 *sophia*. *Strong's Concordance* defines the word "wisdom, insight, skill (human or divine), intelligence." *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word "*wisdom* (properly, 'clarity')." The Greek word for *revelation* is #602 *apokalupsis*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as "an uncovering." *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as "uncovering (unveiling)," stating also that "*apokálypsis* ('revelation, unveiling') is principally used of the *revelation* of Jesus Christ (the Word), especially a *particular* (spiritual) *manifestation* of Christ (His will) previously unknown to the extent (because 'veiled, covered')."

1 Thess. 5:16–18 Rejoice evermore. ¹⁷Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

6 Luke 13:23–24 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, ²⁴Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Matt. 7:13–14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Matt. 7:21–23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

7 1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

Isa. 43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

8 John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

What we learn from the definitions of these words is that the apostle prayed that God would reveal to the Ephesians those spiritual truths concerning Jesus Christ that previously were covered but now are able to be revealed, giving clarity to God's purposes in His Son. The heart of man is by nature dark, sealed, and alienated from spiritual truths and realities. He cannot truly see God, though he is aware of God's existence throughout creation and His eternal power and Godhead.⁹ But though creation reveals God's eternal power and Godhead, it cannot reveal the true essence of God or His divine plan for man. For this, spiritual wisdom and revelation are needed, which only the Lord Himself can provide. These truths must be imparted spiritually, simply because through natural perception, an invisible God¹⁰ cannot be accurately perceived, nor His person truly known.

There are many things that those who lack the Spirit cannot perceive. They cannot perceive the resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹¹ They cannot perceive the powers of the Spirit and/or His manifestations.¹² They cannot grasp the great courage and boldness that the Spirit imparts to those purposed to speak for Jesus Christ, even if uneducated and untrained in public discourse.¹³ Ultimately the natural man, when governed by the natural mind, will not accept spiritual things, because to him they are deemed as foolishness (I

Cor. 2:14). *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The reason that the natural man, who has no connection to the Spirit of God, deems spiritual truths as foolishness is that what is seen by spiritual men, he lacks the ability to see or perceive, much less rejoice in. Since the natural man does not have the Spirit of God, who alone can reveal God, those of the flesh are blind, obtuse, and completely removed from the higher, holy, and heavenly realm of the Spirit.

(Benson Commentary, I Cor. 2:14) No man, as naturally born into the world, and not supernaturally born again of the Spirit, can see the kingdom of God, or receive, in faith and love, the spiritual mysteries of redemption by the cross of Christ. To all unregenerate men, these things will, in one way or other, appear foolishness, uninteresting, unnecessary, inconsistent, absurd: and doubtless proud reasoners have scoffed at them, more than ever mere sensualists did. No ingenuity, address, or reasoning of the preacher can prevent this effect: no application of a man's own mind, except in humble dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, can enable him to perceive the real nature and glory of them.

For any to be taught of God and brought into the heavenly mysteries and truths of the spiritual world, then they must be given the Spirit of God. It is through the

⁹ Rom. 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

¹⁰ Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

¹¹ I Tim. 1:17 *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

¹² Heb. 11:27 *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him [God] who is invisible.*

¹³ Acts 17:32 *And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.*

¹² Acts 2:11-13 *Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

¹² *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? ¹³Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

¹³ Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

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possession of the Spirit that the things of God are made known. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God* (1 Cor. 2:11).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, 1 Cor. 2:11) *things of God knoweth no man*—rather, “none knoweth,” not angel or man. This proves the impossibility of any knowing the things of God, save by the Spirit of God (who alone knows them, since even in the case of man, so infinitely inferior in mind to God, none of his fellow men, but his own spirit alone knows the things hidden within him).

It should be the great purpose of the Christian’s life to more intimately come to know his Savior.¹⁴ The Christian is commanded to do so,¹⁵ and those truly led by Christ’s Spirit will with great effort make this their primary aim in life. Once a Christian is given the Spirit of God, the quest to come to know the Lord can begin. Israel’s great sin, and that which led to her destruction, was her lack of spiritual knowledge, and the primary reason for this was that she first rejected a knowledge of God. What was true of Israel is still true today, that those who are destroyed through a *lack of knowledge* are the very same who stubbornly reject being taught anything by the Lord. It is also only when men truly repent and return to the Lord,¹⁶ that they can actually come to know Him

(Hos. 6:3). *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*

(Pulpit Commentary, Hos. 6:3) *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. . . .* Aben Ezra understands the exhortation of intellectual knowledge: “To know Jehovah is the secret of all wisdom, and for this alone was man created. But he cannot know God till he has learnt many doctrines of wisdom, which are, as it were, a ladder in order to mount up to this highest step of knowledge.”

All true knowledge of God begins first with faith in God’s Son. It is He who has revealed God to man, and only through Him can the mysteries of God be known.¹⁷ To begin to know Christ is to begin to know the Father, and beginning to know the Father can come only through, first, faith in His Son. It is in Him that the Lord has made Himself known,¹⁸ and only through His Spirit that any true knowledge of God can be gained. For this reason the apostle prayed that *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory*, would impart to the Ephesians that necessary spiritual *wisdom and revelation* directly related to the Son of God. It is important also to understand that emphasis is placed on not merely *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ* but also *the Father of glory*. What this reveals is that He whom the apostle desired the Ephesians to be given spiritual

14 Phil. 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

15 II Pet. 3:18 *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

16 Hos. 6:1 *Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.*

17 John 8:19 *Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

18 Matt. 11:27 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

John 17:25–26 *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.* ²⁶*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

wisdom and revelation from was *the Father of glory*. It was He who had glorified Jesus Christ¹⁹ and He who has called those who believe upon His Son to eternal glory. Important also to note is the fact that all divine and heavenly glory originates in the Father of glory. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was* (John 17:5).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, John 17:5) *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*—when “in the beginning the Word was with God” (Joh 1:1), “the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father” (Joh 1:18). With this pre-existent glory, which He veiled on earth, He asks to be reinvested, the design of the veiling being accomplished—not, however, simply as before, but now in our nature.

The *Father of glory* has direct relationship with Christ’s title *the Lord of glory*,²⁰ which defines Jesus after His resurrection, ascension, and glorification. He whom the apostle prayed would enlighten the Ephesians was *the Father of glory*, who had first glorified His Son, Jesus Christ.²¹ There will also come a preordained future time, when Jesus comes in the glory of the Father,²² when also God and His heavenly glory will be made to be fully known upon the earth.

Ephesians 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

(Benson Commentary, Eph. 1:18) Observe, reader, it is by the eyes of the understanding alone that we discern the things of God; and in order hereto these eyes must first be opened, and then enlightened, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, spoken of in the former verse.

Without a man being spiritually enlightened, he is little more than a beast. All his thoughts of God are wrong; all presumptions of the spiritual realm remain in error. A spiritually unenlightened man is by all divine measures a completely blind man.

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:18) The views which people entertain of themselves and of God are narrow and wrong. The understanding is enfeebled and perverted by the practice of sin. It is limited in its operations by the necessity of the case, and by the impossibility of fully comprehending the great truths which pertain to the divine administration. One of the first effects of true religion is on the understanding. It enlarges its views of truth; gives it more exalted conceptions of God; corrects its errors; raises it up toward the great Fountain of love. And nowhere is the effect of the true religion more apparent than in shedding light on

19 Acts 3:13 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.*

20 Jas. 2:1 *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. I Cor. 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

21 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Eph. 1:20-23 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²²And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

John 5:27 *And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

John 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Col. 2:9 *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

22 Matt. 16:27 *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

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the intellect of the world, and restoring the weak and perverted mind to a just view of the proportion of things, and to the true knowledge of God.

Three things are listed in Paul's prayer for the Ephesians that he implored the Lord to reveal to them:

1. *The hope of His calling*
2. *The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*
3. *The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe*

The knowledge that Paul prayed would be imparted to the Ephesians has specific relationship to God, since it is *his calling*, *his inheritance*, and *his power* that believers are the most ignorant of. Generally speaking, all false religion is interested in man: what man's power is and how man may use, albeit misuse, the Lord's power to gain what man wants. This is not true of genuine Christianity. Its focus is upon the Lord and His purposes for the saved, not their purposes for themselves.

The hope of his calling. The hope of God's calling is attached to the glory that is directly related to God's call in Jesus Christ. It is through the Son of God that there is given a heavenly invitation to partake in the glory of God.²³ *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by*

Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (1 Pet. 5:10).

God's call in Jesus Christ is a call to eternal glory. It is a call whose final end is sharing in divine glory. It is a call to glory, as Benson has said, "not merely to behold, but to possess."²⁴ The invitation by which this call is delivered to man is in the person of God's Son.²⁵ The glory spoken of is "that eternal glory whereof believers at the last day will be made partakers, which is called God's glory, because it is that which he hath promised to them, and will at last put them in possession of."²⁶ It is not simply that those called by God through Jesus Christ will enter heaven, but even more astonishingly, they will share in the glory of its Creator. Through the Son of God is given an invitation to share in that eternal glory, which all who are merely flesh, and thus have sinned, have woefully fallen short of.²⁷ *Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ* (II Thess. 2:14). This future glory will be revealed in us, at the last day.²⁸ Second Corinthians 4:17 states that regardless of our present and momentary troubles, the heavenly glory that will be given to saints exceeds beyond all measure any affliction undergone in this life.²⁹ The sorrow, pain, and anguish of this life, according to Scripture, cannot even remotely compare to the weighty glory awaiting Christ's saints in the next.

23 1 Pet. 5:1 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Rom. 5:1-2 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

24 Benson Commentary, 1 Pet. 5:10

25 1 Cor. 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

26 Matthew Poole's Commentary, 1 Pet. 5:10

27 Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

28 Rom. 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

29 II Cor. 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

The *hope of his calling* is therefore without question the hope of glory that the gospel of Jesus Christ is purposed to reveal to man.

The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 1:18) Comp. Colossians 1:27, "the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." The inheritance of God is the unity with Christ, in which lies the earnest and hope of glory.

Whereas Israel and its leader, Moses, were given hope of entering Canaan³⁰ and possessing its land for an inheritance, Christians, because of having Christ in them, have heaven as their future hope of possession. Just as God provided an inheritance for Israel,³¹ upon which they held hope of obtaining, so does God provide a far more exceeding spiritual inheritance, for those chosen in God's Son. It is not enough for the Lord to make a people for Himself without also providing a habitation for their dwelling. For Israel this habitation was earthly Canaan. For saints it is God's heavenly Jerusalem,³² whose inhabitants are an *innumerable company of angels*, which Deuteronomy refers to as myriad of angels³³ and the *general assembly and church of the firstborn*. In this heavenly inheritance believers may draw near to God as a beloved Father, and not as in the early days

of Israel, when they needed to stand afar off from the Lord.³⁴ In this heavenly inheritance there is also present *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*. *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel* (Heb. 12:22–24).

(*Benson Commentary*, Heb. 12:23) *To the general assembly*—To the Christian Church, consisting of the whole number of true believers spread over all the world. The word *πανηγυρις*, here used, properly signifies a stated convention, upon some joyful and festival occasion: particularly it is applied to the concourse at the Olympic games; in which view it presents a very elegant and lively opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror when they were convened before mount Sinai. *And church of the firstborn*—The whole body of true believers, consisting of converted Jews and Gentiles. The saints are called the *firstborn*, because under the law the firstborn were peculiarly appropriated to God, and heirs of a double honour and inheritance: and the saints are in a special manner devoted to God, are made his children by a gratuitous adoption, and entitled to the heavenly inheritance. Therefore they are said (Rev-

30 Num. 13:1–2 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.*

31 Num. 34:2 *Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)*

32 Rev. 21:2 *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

33 Deut. 33:2 *And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.*

34 Exod. 20:18–21 *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. ²⁰And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. ²¹And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.*

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elation 14:4)³⁵ to be *redeemed from among men, the first-fruits to God and the Lamb*, being the most excellent of mankind, as the *first-fruits* were judged to be the best of the harvest. *Which are written in heaven*—The firstborn of Israel were enrolled by Moses in catalogues kept on earth, but these are registered in heaven as citizens of the New Jerusalem, and entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the church of God, whether militant or triumphant. . . . *And to the spirits of just, or righteous, men made perfect*—Namely, the spirits of the saints in paradise, with whom the saints on earth have communion by faith, hope, and love, and make up one body with them. These are said to be *made perfect*, because, being justified before God, and fully sanctified in their natures, they are completely holy; and being freed from all the infirmities of the body, are perfected in a much higher sense than any who are still on earth.

Ephesians 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Spiritual power is directed both toward, and becomes available to, those who believe. It is this power of God manifested toward the Christian that saves his soul, enlightens his eyes, and makes sight available to the spiritual world invisible to the naked eye. As unlearned as believers are to the great hope of God's calling in Christ and His inheritance in the saints, so also are they equally as blind to the exceeding greatness of God's power to us who believe. The power spoken of is

not a power within us, but a divine power that both can be, and is directed toward us. To truly know the Lord, a believer must be illuminated and enlightened to God's power, which is exerted toward His people when they believe. It is only as this heavenly power toward the Christian is both perceived and believed in that a true and proper knowledge of the Lord is attained.

If there is anything that produces doubt in saints more, it is when they do not believe in the *exceeding greatness* of God's power. Doubt in the Lord often has at its core a lack of faith in the Lord, to hear our prayers, come to our aid, and deliver us from so many internal fears that haunt the saved.³⁶ It is this divine power of God that the apostle prayed the Ephesians would be enlightened to. It is the same power that God exerted when He raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand.

Ephesians 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

The power that the apostle prayed that the Ephesians would be enlightened to was resurrection power, the power that is able to raise the dead³⁷ and supersedes natural laws. It is this knowledge of divine power that the apostle prayed might be made known to the Ephesians. A similar prayer is necessary for us. For though the

35 Rev. 14:4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

36 II Cor. 7:5 *For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.*

37 John 5:21 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

Rom. 6:4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Rom. 8:11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

Lord's people love Him, desire to please Him, and are willing to forsake all to follow Him, still there is great lack if there remains unbelief in God's divine power. This opens up a very important spiritual truth, which is that if God's people really believed that Jesus Christ is truly in heaven and that God's power has lifted Him there, then very little doubt would remain regarding virtually every human sorrow on this earth. To believe that Jesus now sits in heaven, because God's power has lifted Him there, can do more to comfort the heart than even a mountain of knowledge, even biblical knowledge. Hence, some of the greatest knowledge of God that a believer can attain is that knowledge and spiritual illumination that directly prompts belief in the exceeding greatness of God's power to those who be-

lieve. And this power was first evidenced to the saints, when God raised His Son from the dead and lifted Him to sit now at God's right hand. This is the divine power that the apostle prays that the Father of glory will reveal to the Ephesians. When done, it would completely change their spiritual lives.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:20) It is impossible to conceive of a more direct exertion of "power" than in raising up the dead; and there is no more striking illustration of the nature of conversion than in such a resurrection.

And set him at his own right hand—The idea is, that great power was displayed by this, and that a similar exhibition is made when man is renewed and exalted to the high honor of being made an heir of God.

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Chapter 5

Ephesians 1:20–2:5

Ephesians 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

HERE we have a continuation of the subject matter of the previous verse,¹ in which the power that will be exerted toward the Christian is directly paralleled with the power that God has already exerted upon Christ. Thus, *the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward us who believe* has already been openly demonstrated upon the One in Whom we have believed, *which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*. It is this resurrection power that the apostle prays the Ephesians might become enlightened to, a celestial power already evinced in raising Jesus from the dead and setting Him at God's *own right hand in heavenly places*. The Christian's destiny will mimic the Savior's destiny. The power that has been exerted upon Him will also be exercised upon those who have believed in Him.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Eph. 1:20) *Which he wrought in Christ*.—The reality of the work of God upon us is insured by the reality of that work upon the true Son of Man, whose members we are, in His resurrection, His ascension, His exaltation over all things at the right hand of God, and His headship of the Church.

Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

The language is both strong and expressive in revealing the level of Christ's exaltation. Because Jesus first came down to the earth² and then descended into the *lower parts of the earth*,³ God has decreed that His name, and His person should be exalted more highly than all other worldly and heavenly powers. The Greek word for *high above* is #5231 *hyper-anó*. Strong's defines it as "far above." Its definition is "from *hyper* and *ano*; above upward, i.e. greatly higher (in place or rank)—far above, over." The humiliation that Christ exhibited⁴ in coming to man

1 Eph. 1:19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

2 John 6:38 *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

John 6:51 *I am the living bread which came down from heaven...*

John 3:13 *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

3 Eph. 4:9 *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)*

4 Matt. 27:27–30 *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. ²⁸And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. ²⁹And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee*

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in the form of a servant and dying for sin is in direct contrast to the glorification He now possesses. Because Jesus was willing to assume the form of a servant on earth,⁵ God has exalted Him to the highest degree of heavenly honor and glory.⁶ The extent of Jesus' ascension is far above His descent, and well beyond all things, including angels and men, who have ever risen in power either upon the earth or in heaven. This includes every principality,⁷ authority,⁸ power,⁹ and dominion¹⁰ ever named or that will be named. The point the apostle is laboring to make is that Jesus has been exalted far above every

conceivable power that has even been or will be, and it is this power that will be exerted toward the members of His body, in whom He now eternally abides.¹¹

Because of their union with the Head, Christ's body's spiritual glorification is secured. Because of the intimate and close relationship that God's new sons possess with the King of heaven,¹² they are guaranteed to share in His upcoming public and universal glorification. The Son of God's glorification therefore was always purposed by God to include those purposed for heaven and their glorification

before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! ³⁰And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

Mark 15:19–20 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. ²⁰And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

John 19:1–3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. ²And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, ³And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

5 Phil. 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

6 Phil. 2:10–11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

7 principality – #746 arché – beginning, origin

8 authority – #1849 exousia – power to act, authority

9 power – #1411 dunamis – (miraculous) power, might, strength

10 dominion – #2963 kuriotés – lordship

11 Gal. 4:6–7 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁷Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Rom. 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

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

Gal. 1:15–16 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

12 Rev. 1:5–6 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, ⁶And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev. 3:20–21 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. ²¹To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

with Him,¹³ in whom now the Christ Spirit both abides and lives.¹⁴

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Eph. 1:21) The higher is His honor, the greater is that of His people, who are His members joined to Him, the Head.

Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

And hath put all things under his feet. The reference here is to Psalm 110:1 (*The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*). The God Who has placed all things under the feet of His Son is the same God, Who has given His Son headship, rulership, and lordship over all things related to the church.

(*Benson Commentary*, Eph. 1:22) *And gave him to be head over all things to the church* — As it is here declared that Christ is raised to universal dominion for the sake of his church, that is, for the noble purpose of erecting and establishing it, and uniting the angels who are in heaven, and all the good men, who have lived and are to live on earth, in one harmonious society, that they may worship and serve God together, and be happy in one another's society to all eternity, it was necessary for accomplishing this grand purpose, that the evil angels should be subjected to him; and even that the material fabric of the world, with every thing it contains, should

be under his direction, that he might order all the events befalling his people, in such a manner as to promote their holiness, and prepare them for heaven.

If Jesus was not given power over all of creation, then it would have remained possible that another force could interrupt God's eternal purposes for the church through His Son. To therefore ensure His Son's eternal exaltation, and those chosen in Him, a similar call to glory, there must not be any power either in heaven or upon the earth that could exceed the power given to Christ—simply because the exceeding greatness of the power and authority given to the Son ensures, because of Christ's present heavenly authority, that all God's purposes in Him will be fulfilled.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). For God to reign eternally and become all in all, His Son must be given complete power and supremacy over all things both in heaven and upon the earth in order that all creation will again be brought together into complete submission and subjection to God. Thus, it is through the universal authority and power imparted to the Son that the Son's heavenly position is secured, His people's salvation is guaranteed, and the certainty of God's ultimate supremacy over all of creation established.¹⁵ Christ's

13 *Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

Rom. 8:29–30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Phil. 3:20–21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Rom. 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

14 *Gal. 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

15 *1 Cor. 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

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present spiritual authority and power ensure this.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Matt. 28:18) It is in reference to this, doubtless, that he speaks here power or authority committed to him over all things, that he might redeem, defend, and save the church purchased with his own blood. His mediatorial government extends, therefore, over the material world, over angels, over devils, over wicked men, and over his own people.

Ephesians 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The church spoken of previously, which consists of those called to heaven through Jesus, is said not to be just part of heaven but actually a part of its King. What is true in marriage, in which the figure is used that two become one,¹⁶ is actually more personified when the Scripture reveals here that two are one. So intimate is the relationship of those who have believed upon the Son of God that it is said they are literally part of Him. He is their Head; they are His body. He is crucial to their happiness and fullness, just as they are to His. To therefore be saved through faith in Jesus Christ is to ultimately be spiritually engrafted into the prophecies concerning

the Messiah¹⁷ and integrated into Christ's own future spiritual glorification.

The fulness of him that filleth all in all. It is the church that fills up Christ and fully exhibits His glorification, and then Christ, Who fills the church *with all the fulness of God*.¹⁸ The Scripture thus reveals that the body of Christ is the fullness of Christ in that it completes His glorification and in that He subsequently fills those called to heaven through Himself with the gifts, grace, and fullness of God. *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace* (John 1:16).

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, John 1:16) *And of his fulness have all we received*; of that plenty of grace which Christ hath, (who hath not the Spirit given him *by measure*, John 3:34,¹⁹ as other saints have, Acts 2:4,6,8²⁰), we who by nature are void of grace, whether taken for the favour of God, or gracious habits, have received, as the skirts of Aaron's garment received the oil which was plentifully poured out on Aaron's head.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 1:23) *The fulness of him*—The word rendered here as “fulness”—πλήρωμα *plērōma*—means properly, that with which anything is filled; the filling up; the contents; notes, Romans

16 Eph. 5:31–32 *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* ³²*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

17 Rom. 11:17–24 *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;* ¹⁸*Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.* ¹⁹*Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.* ²⁰*Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:* ²¹*For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.* ²²*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.* ²³*And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.* ²⁴*For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*

18 Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

19 John 3:34 *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

20 Acts 2:4, 6, 8 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ...* ⁶*Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. ...* ⁸*And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

11:12.²¹ ... It seems probable that the sense is, that the church is the “completion or filling up” of his power and glory. It is that without which his dominion would not be complete. He has control over the angels and over distant worlds; but, his dominion would not be complete without the control over his church, and that is so glorious, that it “fills up” the honor of the universal dominion, and makes his empire complete.

No exaltation of the Son of God would be complete without those whom the Lord purposed Jesus should bring to heaven, then completing and filling up His own glorification. The body is therefore that which fills up the Savior and makes His glory complete, even as the Head fills each and every member in His body with the fullness of God. This is practically evidenced when Christ fills His members with the Spirit,²² imparts to them degrees of His own spiritual power and authority,²³ and ultimately completes through Himself all those called to heaven.²⁴

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Like all things dead, there is absolutely no power in those born *dead in trespasses and sins* to recover themselves from death.

This is true with anything breathless, and it is equally true when men are dead in their sins, as nothing dead, which has passed from life to death and has expired from the land of the living, can recover itself to again become alive on its own. To be made alive is an act that only celestial power and authority can accomplish. It is something that the Lord Himself must do and cannot be done through any innate or natural ability possessed by man. It is God Who first gave life and only He Who can recover those dead, who have through sin forfeited it.²⁵

The Greek words describing the state sinners are in, which constitutes their death, are #3900 *paraptóma* (trespasses), and #266 *hamartia* (sins). *Paraptóma*, the Greek word for *trespasses*, is defined by *Stong's* as “a false step, a trespass.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word, “properly, fall away after being close-beside, i.e. a lapse (deviation) from the truth; an error, ‘slip up’; wrong doing that can be (relatively) unconscious, ‘non-deliberate.’” *Hamartia*, the Greek word for “sins” is defined by *Strong's* as “a sin, failure.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word, “*hamartía* (a feminine noun derived from 1 /A ‘not’ and 3313 /*méros*, ‘a

21 Rom. 11:12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

22 John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Eph. 1:13 In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

23 Luke 9:1–2 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. ²And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Matt. 10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Eph. 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

24 Col. 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

25 John 11:43–44 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. ⁴⁴And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

part, share of’)—properly, no-share (‘no part of’); loss (forfeiture) because not hitting the target; sin (missing the mark).” Both words are brought together in this verse to stress that though sinners may not know it (nothing dead is really aware of anything), they have missed the mark of standing approved before God. It is this state of being dead in trespasses and sins, thus, wholly missing the mark of being accepted or approved by the Lord, that is true of every fleshly born man. He who is dead in sin is actually without any true understanding of being in sin or any deep awareness of God, Who is trying to redeem him from it. To a dead man there is neither perception of actual sins committed against the Lord nor any true awareness of his own unregenerate state, which makes him unacceptable to Him. The dead know nothing at all, and those dead in sin are as dead to God as they are to the carnal nature, which makes them unapproved, inexcusable, and useless to Him.²⁶

(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 2:1) *Trespasses and sins*.—These two words, more often used separately, are here brought together, to form a climax. The word rendered “trespass” signifies a “swerving aside and falling”; the word rendered “sins” is generally used by St. Paul in the singular to denote “sin” in the abstract, and signifies an entire “missing of the mark” of life.

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 2:1) It is affirmed here of those to whom Paul wrote at Ephesus, that before they were converted, they were “dead in sins.” There is not anywhere a more explicit proof of depravity than this, and no stronger language can be used. They were “dead” in relation to that to which they afterward became alive—i. e., to holiness.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Men by nature are born in sin.²⁷ Just as it is the devil who first introduced sin and apostasy to Adam and Eve,²⁸ it is also this same *prince of the power of the air* who is described as that apostate *spirit* that works today in the *children of disobedience*. Just as there are fallen men, so are there fallen spirits; inhabiting the evil world that all mankind is born into. This present world testifies and furnishes proof of both. *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them* (II Cor. 4:4).

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 4:4) *he rules in the hearts and lives of all wicked people*—and the world is full of wicked people. They obey him, and submit to his will in executing fraud, and rapine, and piracy, and murder, and adultery, and lewdness; in wars and fightings; in their amusements and pastimes; in dishonesty and falsehood. The dominion of Satan over this world has been, and is still almost universal and absolute; nor has the lapse of 1,800 years rendered the appellation improper as descriptive of his influence, that he is the god of this world. The world pursues his plans; yields to his temptations; neglects, or rejects the reign of God as he pleases; and submits to his scepter, and is still full of abomination cruelty, and pollution, as he desires it to be.

The word *worketh* is the Greek word #1754 *energeó*, defined by *Strong’s* as “to be at work, to work, to do.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines *energeó*, “properly, *energize*, working in a situation which

26 Ps. 73:22 *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*

27 Ps. 51:5 *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

28 Gen. 3:4–5 *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

brings it from one stage (point) to the next, like an electrical current *energizing* a wire, bringing it to a *shining light bulb*.” By these definitions it is observed that the devil is actively, industriously, and conscientiously working both in and among the *children of disobedience* to reject divine will and rebel against heavenly sovereignty. Satan also does not stop, pause, or take any reprieve from his continuing revolt against the Lord and all things holy and good. He is always and continually at *work*; consequently, to foolishly assume that after one evil work is accomplished another is not purposed to follow is not to know the great extent of the prince of this world’s traitorous mission and his continued evil agenda against the Lord and divine rule. Ultimately the world’s leader of sin, who first introduced the idea to sin against God, is as diligently at work today to lead his descendants into greater spiritual law-breaking activities as he deceptively led our first parents to spiritually apostatize. There are *children of disobedience* even as there are children of God; hence, where Satan exercises spiritual influence on those born in trespasses and sin, God exercises spiritual influence within those born of Him through His Son.²⁹ Practically, there always will be vigorous and vehement conflict with those influenced and under the control of Satan and those choosing to be submissive to the Lord and His divine will for man.³⁰

Ephesians 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Before any child of God became to be led by the Spirit of God,³¹ he was previously led and enslaved by the lusts and carnal desires of the flesh and the mind. To be led by the flesh is to succumb to the desires and promptings of it. It is to be subjugated to a fallen nature, which is separate and opposed to all things holy. Religion also can do nothing to help in removing the propensities of the flesh in an unsaved man, even with continued religious observance, without spiritual regeneration, which actually changes him.³² At best, religion attempts to reform the outside of the cup but can actually do nothing to clean the inside,³³ where the real origin of sin lives, thrives, and makes its abode.³⁴

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 2:3) “will of the flesh” is that to which the flesh, or the unrenewed nature of man, prompts; and Paul says that all had been engaged in fulfilling those fleshly propensities. This was clearly true of the pagan, and it was no less true of the unconverted Jew that he lived for himself, and sought to gratify the purposes of a depraved nature, though it might manifest itself in a way different from the pagan.

29 Phil. 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

30 Gal. 5:17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

31 Rom. 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

32 Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

Ezek. 36:26 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

Col. 3:10 *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*
33 Matt. 23:26 *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

34 Matt. 15:11 *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.*

Matt. 5:28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

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And were by nature the children of wrath. It is not favor that those born of the flesh are born into, but *wrath*. The Scripture therefore advances the argument that the *children of disobedience* are, because of their fleshly birth, objects of divine *wrath*. The Greek word for *wrath* is #3709 *orgé*. Strong's defines it as "impulse, wrath." HELPS Word-study defines the word as "from *orgáo*, 'to teem, swelling . . . (referring to God's) fixed, controlled, passionate feeling against sin."

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 2:2) *The children of wrath*—Exposed to wrath, or liable to wrath. They did not by nature inherit holiness; they inherited that which would subject; them to wrath.

It is not until a man is born of the Spirit³⁵ that he is separated from those born of the flesh. There are but two natures to be born of—one of the flesh and one of the Spirit—and each are completely contrary the one to the other.³⁶ Each nature has a different origin, and each nature possesses distinct fruits. The works of those born of the flesh include *adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like* (Gal. 5:19–21). The fruit of those born of the Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22–23 as *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*.

The gospel of John also speaks of the two natures. *That which is born of the flesh is*

flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6) .

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, John 3:6) *That which is born, &c.*—A great universal proposition; "That which is begotten carries within itself the nature of that which begat it" [Olshausen].

The book of Romans reveals the spiritual depravity and dead spiritual nature of those in the world, dead in sin and without the Spirit of Christ.

Romans 3:10–12 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

¹² *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

What these verses reveal is not simply what a few evil men are but what all mankind is. It is not merely the rankest of sinners whom God esteems as unrighteous, without anything good, righteous, or holy, but all mankind, without even one provable example in the entire history of the world to prove otherwise. Because of this, both Jew and Gentile, the church and non-church, are *together become unprofitable* and are *together all gone out of the way*. Other translations of these verses emphasize the uncontested spiritual reality, in this world and among those born of the flesh, of a mere carnal nature—*there is none that doeth good, no, not one . . . none that seeketh after God, and none righteous.*

(New International Version)

³⁵ John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

³⁶ Gal. 5:17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;

¹¹ there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.”

(New Living Translation)

As the Scriptures say,

“No one is righteous—
not even one.

¹¹ No one is truly wise;
no one is seeking God.

¹² All have turned away;
all have become useless.

No one does good,
not a single one.”

(English Standard Version)

as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ no one understands;
no one seeks for God.

¹² All have turned aside; together they have
become worthless;
no one does good,
not even one.”

(Christian Standard Bible)

as it is written:

There is no one righteous, not even one.

¹¹ There is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away;
all alike have become worthless.

There is no one who does what is good,

not even one.

(Holman Christian Standard Bible)

as it is written:

There is no one righteous, not even one.

¹¹ There is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away;
all alike have become useless.

There is no one who does what is good,
not even one.

The book of Romans continues God’s righteous indictment of the *children of disobedience* upon whom divine wrath is even now being revealed³⁷ and promised, at the Lord’s day, to be fully exercised upon all ungodly, unrighteous, and wicked in the earth.³⁸

Romans 3:13–19 *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

¹⁴ *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*

¹⁵ *Their feet are swift to shed blood:*

¹⁶ *Destruction and misery are in their ways:*

¹⁷ *And the way of peace have they not known:*

¹⁸ *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

¹⁹ *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

³⁷ Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

³⁸ Rom. 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Col. 3:6 For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

Rev. 6:16–17 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: ¹⁷For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Rom. 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

Rev. 16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

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The purpose of the Mosaic law is referenced in verse nineteen when it states that *every mouth may be stopped* from professing itself as anything either good or holy. Consequently, the real purpose of the law given to Moses was to make sin known,³⁹ but it was never purposed to actually remove it from man. Indeed, sin could be temporarily covered by sacrifice,⁴⁰ but it could never be eternally removed. Ultimately, the law was purposed to bring men into an awareness of their sin but unable to sufficiently save them from it. For this great task One greater than the law needed to be sent by God,⁴¹

One in Whom the fullness of the godhead lives in bodily form.⁴² One greater than the prophets,⁴³ One greater than the covenant of the law before Him,⁴⁴ One greater than the cleansing of men with merely water,⁴⁵ One greater than priests in the Old Testament,⁴⁶ and One greater than all the angelic ministers purposed to reveal God's will to man.⁴⁷ This One Whom we have spoken of is He Whom God has sent to save the world. Ultimately, Jesus Christ is greater than all who have come before Him, simply because He is the only begotten of God.⁴⁸

39 Rom. 7:7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

40 Heb. 10:1-4 *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

41 Gal. 4:4-5 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

42 Col. 2:9 *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

43 Mark 1:7 *And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.*

44 Heb. 8:6-12 *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

45 Matt. 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

46 Heb. 7:26 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

Heb. 4:15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

47 Acts 7:38 *This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:*

Acts 7:53 *Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

Heb. 2:2 *For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;*

Deut. 33:2 *And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.*

Gal. 3:19 *Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

48 Ps. 2:7 *I will declare the decree: The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

It is also clearly observed that men are not under probation, in which it has yet to be determined whether they will be found guilty or not, since this verdict has already been decided, and all that waits is the enforcement of divine punishment. This final future judgment for sin will commence at the day of the Lord,⁴⁹ when divine wrath will replace the grace of God offered before it.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

God, *who is rich in mercy*—means that mercy abides in an abundant and overflowing measure within Him and is actually an element of His divine character and nature. The Greek word for *mercy* is #1656 *eleos*. It is defined by *Strong's* as “mercy, pity, compassion.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “covenant-loyalty,

covenant-love’ ... —properly, ‘mercy’ as it is defined by loyalty to God’s covenant.” It is God’s mercy that saves the transgressor from the breakage of divine law and the same future mercy that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns will result in giving eternal life to those He has saved. Hence, the Lord’s mercy will continue to be manifested toward the saved until the day of Christ’s literal appearing in the clouds, coming in the glory of the Father,⁵⁰ when also through the love of God and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal life is fully entered into. *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life* (Jude 21).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Jude 1:21) *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*] The verb implies, as in Luke 2:25; Luke 2:38; Luke 23:51,⁵¹ that the “mercy” is thought of as in the future, and probably there is a special reference to the second coming of Christ as that which will man-

Acts 13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Heb. 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Heb. 5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

⁴⁹ *Amos 5:18–20 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. ¹⁹As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. ²⁰Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?*

Zeph. 1:14–16 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. ¹⁵That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wateness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

II Pet. 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

⁵⁰ *Luke 9:26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.*

Matt. 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Matt. 24:30–31 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Mark 14:62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Rev. 1:7–8 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. ⁸I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

⁵¹ *Luke 2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.*

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ifest His mercy no less than His righteous judgment.

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

What this verse reveals is that God does not save any individual apart from his being *quickened together with Christ*. The Christian's life is therefore completely bound to Christ's, first being brought to life from the grave and subsequently glorified in heaven. To also enter the hereafter, it must be *together* with God's Son and cannot be, nor ever will be, allowed to be apart from being made spiritually alive both through and with Him.

By grace ye are saved. The grace of salvation is that we were *quickened* and made alive *together with Christ*, whereby His life, by divine grace, becomes ours and His victory over death has been abundantly shared with us.⁵² As a mere fleshly born man, no one has any right to spend eternity with God, because he possesses no spiritual righteousness that would make him worthy of it. Thus, the grace of God is such that the resurrected, risen, and ascended spiritual life of God's Son has been eternally imputed to those who have believed on Him. In reality, Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification have been, because of divine grace, imputed to His followers, resulting in their complete and full salvation.

Luke 2:38 *And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

Luke 23:51 *(The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.*

⁵² Rom. 6:4-5 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

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Chapter 6

Ephesians 2:6–10

Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

WHAT is revealed here is a work of God, a heavenly work, which only divine power could accomplish, whereby through faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God's journey, beginning at the cross and ending at His throne, has been extended and imparted to include those who have believed in Him. This is God's plan of redemption, whereby Jesus' resurrection becomes the believer's; ¹His ascension, their ascension;² and His habitation at God's right hand, are astoundingly a part of their own new glorified state. By being *quicken*ed, *rais*ed, and *made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, those He has saved have been made to become (because of His work for them) citizens of heaven³—a world far above the earth, which the book of Hebrews vividly and beautifully provides a glimpse of. *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the*

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:22–23).

(*Benson Commentary*, Heb. 12:22) *Unto the city of the living God* — That holy and happy society or community, of which true believers are citizens, Ephesians 2:19; Php 3:20;⁴ in which God himself dwells, and which is governed by him; *the heavenly Jerusalem* — Termed, (Galatians 4:26,⁵) the Jerusalem above; so called because it has its original from heaven, and the members thereof have their conversation in heaven, and tend thither, and its most perfect state will be there. All these glorious titles belong to the New Testament church. *To an innumerable company of angels* — To join with them in the service of God, typified by the cherubs in the temple. The Greek is, *to myriads of angels*. A *myriad* is ten thousand; and when it is used in the plural number, it signifies an innumerable company, as we here render it. Possibly he

1 Rom. 6:4–5 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

Col. 2:12 *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

2 II Cor. 4:14 *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

1 Thess. 4:14 *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

3 Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

4 Eph. 2:19 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

5 Gal. 4:26 *But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

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speaks with an allusion to the angels that attended the presence of God in the giving of the law, whereof the psalmist says, *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, &c.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Heb. 12:23) *To the general assembly* — To the Christian Church, consisting of the whole number of true believers spread over all the world. The word *πανηγυρις*, here used, properly signifies a stated convention, upon some joyful and festival occasion: particularly it is applied to the concourse at the Olympic games; in which view it presents a very elegant and lively opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror when they were convened before mount Sinai. *And church of the firstborn* — The whole body of true believers, consisting of converted Jews and Gentiles. The saints are called the *firstborn*, because under the law the firstborn were peculiarly appropriated to God, and heirs of a double honour and inheritance: and the saints are in a special manner devoted to God, are made his children by a gratuitous adoption, and entitled to the heavenly inheritance. Therefore they are said (Revelation 14:4)⁶ to be *redeemed from among men, the first-fruits to God and the Lamb*, being the most excellent of mankind, as the *first-fruits* were judged to be the best of the harvest. *Which are written in heaven* — The firstborn of Israel were enrolled by Moses in catalogues kept on earth, but these are registered in heaven as citizens of the New Jerusalem, and entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the church of God, whether militant or triumphant. See note on [Phlm] 1:23, and Php 4:3.⁷ *And to God the Judge of all* — Instead of standing afar off, as

your fathers did at Sinai, you are allowed to draw near to God as to a friend and father, and to have intercourse and communion with him, who, as *Judge of all*, will reward you with a crown of glory, and inflict on your persecutors condign punishment. *And to the spirits of just, or righteous, men made perfect* — Namely, the spirits of the saints in paradise, with whom the saints on earth have communion by faith, hope, and love, and make up one body with them. These are said to be *made perfect*, because, being justified before God, and fully sanctified in their natures, they are completely holy; and being freed from all the infirmities of the body, are perfected in a much higher sense than any who are still on earth.

Because of the saint's connection to the Son of God, the Christian's own destiny is secured. Heaven is now his rightful home, and God has given him claim to it as his possession. It is this spiritual point that the apostle is endeavoring to both disclose and convey, that the entire process of salvation—from being saved from sin to being raised and seated with Christ in heavenly places—has already (past tense) been wholly completed, finalized, and decided. The work of God's purpose to save the sinner is done, His people's full salvation ratified, and only time is needed for all of God's other purposes for the chosen to be fulfilled. And although the believer is not bodily present with Christ in heaven, heaven is now his; he can claim it as his own, and it will forever remain so by divine right. What God has said will be; what God has said has been done—is done.⁸ This undoubt-

6 Rev. 14:4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

7 Phlm. 1:23 *There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Phil. 4:3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.*

8 Isa. 14:24 *The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:*

Isa. 46:9-10 *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*

edly includes those previously dead in trespasses and sin, being *quicken*ed, *rais*ed, and *seated together* with *Christ Jesus*, in the same heavenly region and domain their Savior now inhabits.

So powerful and full of grace is God's plan of salvation that not only is life recovered, but heavenly exaltation has occurred. This hidden plan of the sinner's redemption⁹ far exceeds being freed from earthly sin and death but extends to being risen and seated with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. To be raised with the Son of God and seated with Him where He presently sits is to share in the glory and honor of Christ.¹⁰ It is this partaking with the *King of glory*¹¹ that is the believer's greatest hope. *Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah* (Ps. 24:10).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 24:10) *Who is this King of glory?*—See the notes at Psalm 24:8.¹²

The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory—On the meaning of the phrase, “the Lord of hosts,” see the notes at Isaiah 1:9.¹³ The essential idea is, that God rules over the universe of worlds considered as marshalled in order, or arrayed as hosts or armies are for battle. All are under His command. The stars in the sky, that seem to be marshalled and led forth in such perfect and beautiful order—the inhabitants of heaven in their different orders and ranks—all these acknowledge Him, and submit to Him as the supreme God. In the close of the psalm, therefore, there is an exact accordance with the thought in the beginning, that God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, and that He should everywhere be recognized and regarded as such.

The saint's union with Christ ensures that the penalty of death for sin has been paid¹⁴

Ezek. 12:25 *For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass...*

9 I Cor. 2:8 *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

10 Rom. 5:2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Rom. 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Rom. 8:30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Phil. 3:20–21 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

I John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

II Pet. 1:3 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

11 Matt. 16:27 *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

I Cor. 2:8 *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

Jas. 2:1 *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.*

12 Ps. 24:8 *Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.*

13 Isa. 1:9 *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*

14 Col. 2:13–14 *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; ¹⁴Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

Luke 7:36–48 *And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. ³⁷And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, ³⁸And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he*

through Jesus receiving its full and final punishment on the cross.¹⁵ Not only has the wrath of God for sin been removed, but also the eternal life of the Savior and His ascension into the heavens have been imparted and imputed to the Lord's new sons. Through their union with the Son of God and the regeneration He produces in them,¹⁶ Christ's own ascension into heaven has provided for His people's glorious entrance into it. His being received up into glory a precursor to their own future glorified state. Ultimately all that the Christian has been given through the grace, mercy, and goodness of God is in direct correlation to Jesus' own death, resurrection, ascension, and present, pre-eminent, and permanent heavenly glorification.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 2:6) We become dead to the world in virtue of his death; we become alive unto God in virtue of his resurrection.

Every true Christian's home is now—by divine right, and according to established biblical truth—in heaven. Though the full realization of this future celestial habitation can only through faith be anticipated, the Holy Spirit, whom every Christian now possesses, is a token and a pledge that all God's promises in His Son, in relationship to the church, will be fulfilled.¹⁷ *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory* (Eph. 1:13–14).

(Benson Commentary, Eph. 1:13) This sealing of the Spirit produces, in every man that possesses it, a new nature, whereby he is marked, or declared to be, the son of God; a mark which, as Macknight observes, is to him a stronger evidence of his title to eternal

spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. ⁴⁰And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. ⁴¹There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. ⁴²And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? ⁴³Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. ⁴⁴And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. ⁴⁵Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. ⁴⁸And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

Rom. 5:8–9 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

15 Ezek. 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

16 Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

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

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

17 II Cor. 1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Eph. 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

life, than if he possessed the miraculous gifts. See on Matthew 7:22; 1 Corinthians 13:2.¹⁸

The Spirit of God is the earnest, the token, that all that God has promised in His Son will one day be a realized heavenly reality. The scripture speaks in the past tense regarding these newly revealed revelations, simply because they are future certainties.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Eph. 2:6) Believers are bodily in heaven in point of right, and virtually so in spirit, and have each their own place assigned there, which in due time they shall take possession of (Php 3:20, 21) [For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.].

Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The *he* Who is spoken of is God, Who will continue throughout the *ages to come* to extend the *riches of his grace* and favor upon His newly regenerated heavenly sons. The grace of God does not cease being directed toward the Christian once in

heaven but will continue to be displayed throughout eternity. It is love, goodness, kindness, and benevolence that is the rule of heaven, and these manifestations of grace will continually be displayed through *Christ Jesus* in the world to come. Just as Jesus Christ will be the Lord's agent in administering divine judgment and justice in the world,¹⁹ so will He be the means through which *the exceeding riches of his (God's) grace* is bestowed upon God's new sons in heaven. It was God's Son, Christ Jesus, Who provided the right to heaven,²⁰ and it is He through Whom God will continue blessing His people.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

It is critical to properly understand that the origin of all salvation is God's work and not our own. Understandably, the cause of all heavenly salvation and future glorification of the church is the Lord's divine purpose. It is neither given nor imparted through any human personal merit or worth.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Eph. 2:8) "God justifies the believing man, not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of Him in whom he believes" [Hooker].

¹⁸ Matt. 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

I Cor. 13:2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

¹⁹ John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Rom. 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

I Pet. 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

²⁰ John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Once it is truly understood that it is by *grace* that men are saved, then it becomes apparent that the Lord has opened salvation to all.²¹ If salvation were by human merit, work, worth, or virtue, then it would undoubtedly, as with all things human, have varying degrees of ability to ensure redemption. But because sinners are saved by *grace through faith*, what cannot be possessed through human means can be received through God's unmerited favor. Sinners also are justified by whom they believe in, and not merely that they have believed. Thus, it is the worth of the Savior and not simply the faith of the sinner that actually saves. When this is properly understood, then not even faith can be deemed as some sort of spiritual merit that produces salvation. It is not that we have believed that actually saves us but the One we have believed upon.

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (II Tim. 1:9). Neither the call nor the salvation of the Christian stems from his own worth or will. Because the purpose to save the lost existed long before the world began, then no part of their redemption existed because of some inherent goodness within them. Because the timing of the Lord's plan to save existed before even the world's formation, this proves that all who have been redeemed from sin have the Lord alone to thank as the origin of their salvation. Salvation is by motive, intent, and design, but none of this intent, motive, and design came from man but from God.

Which was given us in Christ Jesus. There is no other name under heaven whereby

men can be saved, simply because there is no other salvation offered, which has not Jesus Christ as the means of God saving man. Hence, both the call to heaven and the salvation afforded because of it was given *in Christ Jesus*. It is through Him God has purposed to save mankind, and apart from Him, God's hope to save cannot be accomplished. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved* (Acts 4:12).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 4:12) *Given* — In this word it is implied that "salvation" has its origin in God; that a Saviour for people must be given by him; and that salvation cannot be originated by any power among people.

If we consider the process by which earthly children are both conceived and born, which results in their being brought forth into the world, through nothing of or in themselves, then it is easy to see how all birth is not truly connected to the one being birthed. If this is true concerning those born of the flesh, is it any less true of those born of the Spirit? All birth, therefore, whether it is earthly or heavenly, originates outside the one conceived. By this it can be understood that all heavenly sonship must be the work of God, simply because it cannot be the work of the one birthed.

Ephesians 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

It is because salvation is by grace and is God's plan to save men that every ounce of room for human boasting is excluded. Because of their prideful and self-centered nature, sinners are prone to boast and

²¹ *I Tim. 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

II Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

I Tim. 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

glory in themselves,²² through foolishly concluding that something innately good lay within themselves and that it is this that has contributed to, or even produced, their salvation. The prouder people are, the less is actually needed to puff them up and consequently think themselves individually worthy of that which only godly generosity, altruism, and charitableness provide. Practically, there is nothing in man, or of man, that could warrant the Lord saving him. For this monumental task of saving a race, who have rebelled against the Lord since their conception, only divinely imparted *grace* has accomplished what human merit never could.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The child of God is by all accounts the work of God. He has been created in Christ Jesus unto good works and ordained to walk in them.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 2:10) *We are his workmanship.*—This verse, on the contrary, is unique and remarkable, characteristic of the idea with which this Epistle starts—the election and predesti-

nation of God, making us what we are—and applying it very strikingly, not only to the first regeneration, but even to the good works which follow it. The word rendered “workmanship” is only used elsewhere in Romans 1:20,²³ where it is applied to the “works” of God in creation. Probably here also it does not exclude our first creation. We are His wholly and absolutely. But the next clause shows that St. Paul refers especially to the “new creation” in Christ Jesus.

Created in Christ Jesus.—This creation, when spoken of distinctively, is the “new creation” (2Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15);²⁴ as, indeed, is the case below (Ephesians 2:15),²⁵ “to create in Himself . . . one new man.” In this passage, however, St. Paul dwells, not on distinction from the old creation, but rather on analogy to it; in both we are simply God’s creatures.

Unto good works.—Properly, on the basis (or, condition) of good works (as in Galatians 5:13; 1Thessalonians 4:17; 2Timothy 2:14²⁶). The good works, in themselves future, being (as the next clause shows) contemplated as already existent in God’s foreknowledge, and as an inseparable characteristic of the regenerate life.

Whereas an unsaved man desires to be his own man, the Christian’s contentment lies in God, Who has created him.

²² Jas. 4:16 *But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.*

²³ Jer. 9:23 *Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:*

²⁴ Ps. 94:4 *How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*
²⁵ Jas. 3:5 *Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*

²⁶ Prov. 25:14 *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.*

²⁷ 23 Rom. 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

²⁸ 24 II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

²⁹ Gal. 6:15 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*
³⁰ 25 Eph. 2:15 *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

³¹ 26 Gal. 5:13 *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

³² I Thess. 4:17 *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

³³ II Tim. 2:14 *Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

No longer desiring to go his own way,²⁷ the saint will pursue searching for God's will for his life. The contrast between saint and sinner cannot be more vividly seen or demonstrated.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 2:10) *For we are his workmanship* — We are his “making” — *ποίημα poiēma*. That is, we are “created or formed” by him, not only in the general sense in which all things are made by him, but in that special sense which is denoted by the new creation; see the notes at 2 Corinthians 5:17.²⁸ Whatever of peace, or hope,

or purity we have, has been produced by his agency on the soul.

All who have ever been made the people of God, individually²⁹ or collectively,³⁰ from the Jew in the Old Testament to the church of God in the New, are without question the children of God according to divine purpose. *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise* (Isa. 43:21). To be formed by God is also directly related to being redeemed by Him. To be *created* anew through regeneration³¹ in Christ Jesus, therefore, is

27 Isa. 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

John 6:66 *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

28 II Corin. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

29 Jer. 1:5 *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Rom. 9:9–18 *For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.*¹⁰ *And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;*¹¹ *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)*¹² *It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.*¹³ *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*¹⁴ *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*¹⁵ *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*¹⁶ *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*¹⁷ *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*¹⁸ *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Rom. 8:29–30 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*³⁰ *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

30 Deut. 7:6–8 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*⁷ *The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:*⁸ *But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

Rom. 9:22–24 *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:*²³ *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*²⁴ *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

I Pet. 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*

Rom. 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

31 Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

John 3:2–7 *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*³ *Jesus answered and*

in effect redemption itself—so that once divine sonship has been established, the certainty of heavenly redemption has also been accomplished.

Created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Every true child of God has been eternally purposed to do good in Christ's name. Following the example of their Savior, those chosen in God's Son³² and made new creatures through Him are purposed to live out their lives doing good in His name. This was the Lord's mission, and so should it be His people's. *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him* (Acts 10:38). It was Christ Who was set apart and anointed to do good, and it should be His people's primary purpose and aim in life to live no differently than this. To do any good there must be sufficient power

and resources to accomplish it. To do divine good requires the Lord's Holy Spirit, both prompting and producing God's good pleasure being manifested in the world. It is this *Spirit of the Lord* Who was upon the Lord Jesus, the genesis Who was restoring sight to the blind and setting at liberty those who were bruised. Through the power³³ and influence of the Spirit of God, Jesus revealed the goodness of God to the world. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised* (Luke 4:18). It is this same *Spirit of the Lord*, though not given in the same measure as possessed by Jesus Christ,³⁴ that equips God's new sons for their call to do good. By the Holy Spirit's presence in the world is the divine good that the Lord desires to accomplish in this world

*said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*⁴*Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*⁵*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*⁶*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*⁷*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

³² Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

³³ Matt. 4:23 *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*

Matt. 8:16 *When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:*

Luke 6:19 *And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.*

Luke 7:12-15 *Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.*¹³*And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*¹⁴*And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*¹⁵*And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

John 9:6-7 *When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.*⁷*And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

Mark 2:5,12 *When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee...*

¹²*And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.*

Luke 7:12-15 *Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.*¹³*And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*¹⁴*And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*¹⁵*And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

³⁴ John 3:34 *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

produced. To do good is the will of God for all men.³⁵ To be filled with God's Holy Spirit allows this holy purpose to actually be accomplished through the goodness and heart of the Son of God, Who lives within the newly created child of God.³⁶

Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. It is not simply that the Lord *hath ordained* believers to eternal life but also that He has prepared beforehand they should fulfill His mission in this life. Hence, just as the call to be saved relates to being chosen,³⁷ so is the call to do good connected to being ordained to do so. Just as the Christian has been ordained to life, so has the life God has purposed him to live been ordained by God. Psalms speaks of how the Lord is both the Architect and Fabricator of all life: *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them* (Ps. 139:16).

(Benson Commentary, Ps. 139:16) *Thine eyes did see my substance* — Hebrews מַלְאָג, *my rude mass*, as Dr. Waterland renders

the word: *massa rudis et intricata adhuc*, says Buxtorf, *neque in veram formam evoluta, a mass, yet rude and entangled, and not unfolded into proper form.* When the matter, out of which I was made, was an unshapen embryo, without any form, it was visible to thee how every part, however minute, would be wrought; *and in thy book all my members were written* — Before any of them were in being they lay open before thy eyes, and were discerned by thee as clearly as if the plan of them had been drawn in a book. Thy eternal wisdom formed the plan, and according to that, thy almighty power raised the structure. The allusion to the needlework seems to be still carried on. "As the embroiderer hath his book or pattern before him, to which he always recurs; so by a method as exact were *all my members in continuance fashioned*; and as from the rude skeins of silk, under the artificer's hands, there at length arises an unexpected beauty, and an accurate harmony of colours and proportions; so, by the skill of the divine workman, is a shapeless mass wrought into the most curious texture of parts, most skilfully interwoven and connected with each other, until it becomes a body harmoniously diversified with all the limbs and lineaments of a man, not one of which at first appeared, any more than the figures were to be seen in the ball of silk.

35 Jas. 4:17 *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

Ps. 37:27 *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*

Prov. 3:27 *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*

36 II Cor. 13:5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

Gal. 1:15–16 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

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

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

37 John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Eph. 4:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 7

Ephesians 2:11–18

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

In addressing the Ephesians, the apostle reminds them of their previous state of being *Gentiles*, separated from God's promises to Israel, evidenced by *circumcision*, which was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham,¹ extending to Abraham's descendants. An important point for believers to remember in respect to being God's *workmanship*, is that before exposure to God's call in Christ, we were both born into and under the dominion of the *flesh*, in a state of *uncircumcision*, which necessitated being es-

tranged from all things divine and holy. To the Jews circumcision was directly tied to salvation.² To be uncircumcised was to possess no true relationship with God, nor any right to His promises.³

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 2:11) *Who are called Uncircumcision* — That is, who are called "the uncircumcised." This was a term similar to that which we use when we speak of "the unbaptized." It meant that they were without the pale of the people of God; that they enjoyed none of the ordinances and privileges of the true religion.

Ephesians 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

1 Gen. 17:1–14 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. ²And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. ³And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, ⁴As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. ⁵Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. ⁶And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. ⁷And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. ⁸And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. ⁹And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. ¹⁰This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. ¹²And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. ¹³He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

2 Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

3 Gen. 17:14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Sinners in their natural and carnal state are unworthy of either divine generosity or goodness being bestowed unto them. To be blessed by God demands an act of generosity and charitableness on God's part, simply because all born of the flesh, Gentiles by nature, are deemed as *strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*. To be born *without Christ* and *without God in the world* is to be earthly born, without any hope of eternal life or future promise of relationship with God. The Greek word for *without God* is #112 *atheos*. It is the word that our present-day word *atheist* comes from. It is defined by *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* as "without God, knowing and worshipping no God." The word's definition includes the idea of not only separation from the Lord but also complete and total ignorance of Him—to be naturally born without any spiritual knowledge of the need to repent or any innate desire to search for and/or make reconciliation with the Father. Ignorance is the main characteristic of the atheist. Because he cannot see an invisible God,⁴ he wrongly assumes that He does not exist. All impious men are at their core spiritually ignorant and blind men. It is this ignorance that contributes to the state of unbelief that sinners by natural birth

are born into. To be born of the flesh, or merely fleshly born, is to be born an atheist, in a lost state that without divine intervention would never change.

Ephesians 2:13 *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

What was stated in the previous verse about *having no hope* and being in a state of *without God in the world* is abruptly reversed. *But now in Christ Jesus*, or in consequence of your faith and union with Him, it is the *blood of Christ* that affords the opportunity to draw *nigh* unto God and ultimately to have ignorance of Him removed. Not until sinners have received access to God's presence, which demands being washed from their sin, can they actually come to know God. The *blood of Christ* and its atoning power accomplish just this.⁵ *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul* (Lev. 17:11). The reason that blood makes atonement for sin is that blood represents life—so that when life is given for sin, which is its just and righteous judgment, then full and complete atonement is made.

⁴ Col. 1:15 *Who [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

I Tim. 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I Tim. 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

⁵ Rom. 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Eph. 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Rev. 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Heb. 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Ephesians 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

To be born a Gentile necessitates being twice removed from God, unable to enter into the inner wall of the sanctuary where the priests alone were allowed to enter,⁶ but also prohibited from entering the Jewish court to then share with those to whom God's promises were made. All Gentiles and all uncircumcised were therefore not simply separated from the inner sanctuary⁷ but also separated from the court of the Jews. If a Gentile entered the temple precinct and this wall barricade was breached, the punishment was death. It is this balustrade of stone that the *middle wall of partition* is referring to.

(Wordpress) Gentiles were allowed to enter the outer temple enclosure in Jerusalem. This large, paved area surrounding the temple and its inner courts was enclosed by a double colonnade of pillars standing 10 m high. The perimeter of this area measured

1.2 km. This outer court was also called the court of the Gentiles.

But Gentiles were physically prevented access to the inner courts of the temple by a 1.4 m high barrier (Paul's "dividing wall of hostility" in Galatians 2:14⁸). The Jewish historian Josephus pointed out that 13 stone slabs with writing in both Greek and Latin were placed at intervals on the barrier, warning Gentiles not to enter. In Josephus' words, "There was a partition made of stone... Its construction was very elegant; upon it stood pillars, at equal distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, some in Greek, and some in Roman letters, that 'no foreigner should go within that sanctuary'" (Wars, 5.5.2). Archaeologists have discovered two of these warning slabs, which state: "No foreigner is allowed to enter within the balustrade surrounding the sanctuary and the court. Whoever is caught will be personally responsible for his ensuing death."⁹

This dividing wall had great significance for Paul, who was arrested in Jerusalem for reportedly bringing a Gentile into the inner court of the temple (see Acts 21:16-30⁹). Paul

6 I Kgs. 8:10-11 *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.*

7 Ezek. 44:9 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.*

II Chron. 23:19 *And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in.*

Num. 3:10 *And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*

8 Gal. 2:14 *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*

9 Acts 21:16-30 *There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. ¹⁷And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. ¹⁸And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. ¹⁹And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. ²⁰And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: ²¹And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. ²²What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. ²³Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; ²⁴Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. ²⁵As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. ²⁶Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the*

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and other Jewish followers of Christ recognized that the God who had previously resided in the temple had entered humanity in the person of Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection had in effect broken down the dividing wall, effecting spiritual unity between Jews and Gentiles. As a result, Paul knew, all people have been granted access to God through saving faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁰

The Temple Warning inscription, also known as the Temple Balustrade inscription or the Soreg inscription, is an inscription that hung along the balustrade outside the Sanctuary of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Two of these tablets have been found. The inscription was a warning to pagan visitors to the temple not to proceed further. Both Greek and Latin inscriptions on the temple's balustrade served as warnings to pagan visitors not to proceed under penalty of death.¹¹

Where all born Gentiles in the flesh were previously *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*, now through Christ Jesus the wall that separated the Gentiles from the Jews has been *broken down*. The worth of Jesus's sacrifice in effect makes Jew and

Gentile *one*, whereby all mankind has access to God's promises given through His Son.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Eph. 2:14) *the middle wall of partition*—Greek, "... of the partition" or "fence"; the middle wall which parted Jew and Gentile. There was a balustrade of stone which separated the court of the Gentiles from the holy place, which it was death for a Gentile to pass. But this, though incidentally alluded to, was but a symbol of the partition itself, namely, "the enmity" between "both" and God (Eph 2:15),¹² the real cause of separation from God, and so the mediate cause of their separation from one another. Hence there was a twofold wall of partition, one the inner wall, severing the Jewish people from entrance to the holy part of the temple where the priests officiated, the other the outer wall, separating the Gentile proselytes from access to the court of the Jews (compare Eze 44:7; Ac 21:28).¹³ Thus this twofold wall represented the Sinaitic law, which both severed all men, even the Jews, from access to God (through sin, which is the violation of the law), and also separated the Gentiles from the Jews.

Ultimately it is the person of Jesus Christ—His blood, His death, and His resurrection—that has removed all barriers between God and man. For this reason the

*temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.*²⁷ *And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,*²⁸ *Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.*²⁹ *(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)*³⁰ *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.*

10 "The Dividing Wall of the 'Court of the Gentiles' in Herod's Temple (Ephesians 2)." Larshaukeland, WordPress, 11 Dec. 2016, larshaukeland.com/bits-pieces/archeology/ephesians/the-dividing-wall-of-the-court-of-the-gentiles-in-herods-temple-ephesians-2/.

11 "Temple Warning Inscription." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 26 Aug. 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_warning_inscription. Accessed 05 Sept. 2024.

12 Eph 2:15 *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

13 Ezek. 44:7 *In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.*

Acts 21:28 *Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.*

Scripture states, *He is our peace*. It is not simply that Jesus provides peace but that *he is peace*. Quite probably the *peace* spoken of is that which Isaiah alludes to: *I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him* (Isa. 57:19).

(*Benson Commentary*, Isa. 57:19) *I create* — I will, by my almighty power, in a wonderful manner produce; *the fruit of the lips* — Praise and thanksgiving, termed the fruit of the lips, Hosea 14:2; Hebrews 13:15.¹⁴ God creates this fruit of the lips, by giving new subjects and causes of thanksgiving, by his mercies conferred on those among his people, who acknowledge and bewail their transgressions, and return to him. *Peace, peace, &c.* — Here we have the great subject of thanksgiving, reconciliation with God, pardon and peace offered to them that *are nigh*, and to them that are *afar off*; not only to the Jew, but also to the Gentile...

The healing spoken of, *I will heal him*, has direct relationship to God and the healing produced when sin is removed and men can draw near unto God. Just as *he is our peace*, so also did *his own self bare our sins*. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed* (1 Pet. 2:24) Both revelations reveal that it is Jesus personally, Who has saved us. Salvation was wrought in Christ's body by the sacrifice of it upon the cross. The foundation of the believer's salvation is therefore not in written law and/or religious ceremonies but in the actual body of the Savior.

14 Hos. 14:2 *Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.*

Heb. 13:15 *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

15 Heb. 9:28 *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

16 Isa. 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

17 Matt. 27:26 *Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*

(*Benson Commentary*, 1 Pet. 2:24) *Who his own self* — In his own person, and by the sacrifice of himself, and not of another, (Hebrews 9:28,¹⁵) *bare our sins* — That is, the punishment due to them; *in his afflicted, torn, dying body on the tree* — The cross, whereon chiefly slaves or servants were wont to suffer. ... *By whose stripes ye were healed* — Of your spiritual disorders: evils infinitely greater than any which the cruelty of the severest masters can bring upon you. See on Isaiah 53:5.¹⁶ “By changing his discourse from the first to the second person, the apostle addressed those slaves who might be beaten unmercifully by cruel masters; because, of all the considerations by which they could be animated to patience, the most powerful was, to put them in mind of the painful stripes with which Christ was beaten, when he was scourged by Pilate's order, (Matthew 27:26,¹⁷) and to tell them, that with these stripes the wounds in their souls, occasioned by sin, were healed; wounds far more painful and deadly than those inflicted on them by their froward masters.”

Jesus was crucified and put to death on a *tree*. It was here that He suffered in the last hours of His life and was numbered with the transgressors, dying and being tortured as servants and slaves were wont to suffer. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors* (Isa. 53:12). To reveal the level of humility and disgrace the Lord suffered as a slave, we need only to remember that Jesus was crucified be-

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tween two malefactors, beaten as a criminal,¹⁸ and mocked as an imposter.¹⁹ He was numbered and accounted as a *transgressor*, whose Hebrew word is the word for *rebel*, #6586 *pasha*, the verb form defined by Strong's as "to rebel, transgress." What is seen here is how the humiliation, suffering, and death that Jesus endured as the lowest of sinners on the cross and outside of Jerusalem²⁰ has produced deliverance from sin. By being crucified and taking on the nature of sin, Jesus

actually created access and opportunity for sinners to acquire peace with God.²¹ Jesus' humiliation turned to our glorification,²² His death to our life,²³ His suffering to our healing. Because Jesus as a servant bore His people's sin, His people have been freed from it as He provides for those who possess faith in Him full release from their previous sinful nature. Just as the Savior stated that everyone who *committeth sin is the servant of sin*, and all men fall into this category, so did He as a

18 Matt. 27:26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

John 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

19 Mark 15:27–31 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

²⁸And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. ²⁹And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days. ³⁰Save thyself, and come down from the cross. ³¹Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

John 19:2–7 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, ³And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. ⁴Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

⁵Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! ⁶When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. ⁷The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

20 John 19:16–17 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. ¹⁷And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

Heb. 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

21 John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 16:31–33 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? ³²Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. ³³These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Eph. 2:14–16 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; ¹⁶And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

22 Rom. 8:29–30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Phil. 3:20–21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Heb. 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

23 Rom. 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

servant through carrying sin ultimately free His people from it.²⁴ The irony of this is not accidental but is actually purposeful in impressing upon those whom Christ has freed and healed from sin the manner in which it has been accomplished: *in his own body on the tree*.

Jesus' journey to the cross vividly and powerfully exemplifies the continuing pain and suffering carrying the weight that sin produces in one's life.²⁵ Jesus's condition of being too weak to sustain the cross²⁶ reveals how no human being on his own is able to endure the weight of sin. It is too heavy, and once placed on a man's shoulders, it will inevitably cause him to drop to his knees.²⁷ Men may pride themselves on many things, but none can pride themselves on conquering the sin within them. It is a cruel and unrelenting master from which no one can escape without divine intervention. It will inevitably weigh all men down, yea, break them, and send them to eternal damnation without atonement being made for its removal.

All who are servants of sin are dangerously close to being cut off from God

forever without grace being given them. Only sons of God are removed from this threat, and only the Son of God can transform one previously born in bondage and a slave to sin to become born of God and freed from the future threat of being both eternally and righteously removed from God's holy presence. *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed* (John 8:35-36).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, John 8:35) *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever*—that is, “And if your connection with the family of God be that of BOND-SERVANTS, ye have no natural tie to the house; your tie is essentially uncertain and precarious. But the Son's relationship to the Father is a natural and essential one; it is an indefeasible tie; His abode in it is perpetual and of right: That is My relationship, My tie: If, then, ye would have your connection with God's family made real, rightful, permanent, ye must by the Son be manumitted and adopted as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.” In this sublime statement there is no doubt a subordinate allusion to Ge 21:10, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of

24 Heb. 9:26 *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

1 John 3:5 *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

Isa. 53:4-6 *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Isa. 53:11-12 *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

25 Deut. 28:28-29 *The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: 29 And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.*

Num. 32:23 *But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*

Exod. 20:5 *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;* 26 Matt. 27:32 *And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.*

27 Luke 5:8 *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

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this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac.” (Compare Ga 4:22–30²⁸).

For Jesus, carrying the sin of mankind ended with His being risen from the dead. For us as sinners, our bondage to sin ends with belief in the risen Christ and confession of Him as Lord of our lives.²⁹

There is no more a clear and succinct record in Scripture that reveals Jesus being both a servant of God and taking on as a servant the bondage of sin than what is recorded in Philippians 2.

Philippians 2:6–8 *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

It was Jesus Who took upon [Himself] the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. It was Jesus, as a servant to God, Who took on the form of being

made in the likeness of man and then assumed the additional responsibility of carrying both the weight of and judgment for man’s sin. The greatest example of Jesus fulfilling His service to God and becoming a servant of men in dying for their sins is made manifest at the cross. Here at the cross, as a *servant*, Jesus suffered as a sinner, was scorned by the world,³⁰ and died apart from God.³¹ The cross of Christ reveals the apex of Jesus’s submission to God and His deep and eternal love for all who are bound by sin. Strikingly, Jesus in the form of a servant allowed the bondage of sin to be placed on His own life, willingly subjecting Himself³² to the death it produces. It is also the death of our Savior that reveals the great and intensive degree of His obedience to God. To obey unto death reveals the breathtaking level of divine submission, subjection, and spiritual obedience that existed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nowhere is the inner humility and spiritually subject character of our Savior made more visible, than when He *humbled himself, and became obedient unto death*. Whatever any man truly is on the inside will eventually manifest itself on

28 Gal. 4:22–30 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. ²³But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. ²⁴Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. ²⁵For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. ²⁶But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. ²⁸Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. ²⁹But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. ³⁰Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. ²⁹ Rom. 10:9–10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

30 Matt. 27:22–25 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. ²³And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. ²⁴When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. ²⁵Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

31 Matt. 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

32 John 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. Gal. 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

the outside. For Jesus, enduring the cross and the death it produced confirms the low and humble position of His person. To properly know Jesus Christ is to come to know the great degree of humility and subjection that is characteristic of the Savior of the world.³³

(*Barnes Notes on the Bible*, Phil. 2:8) *He humbled himself*— Even then, when he appeared as a man. He had not only laid aside the symbols of his glory Philippians 2:7,³⁴ and become a man; but when he was a man, he humbled himself. Humiliation was a constant characteristic of him as a man. He did not aspire to high honors; he did not affect pomp and parade; he did not demand the service of a train of menials; but he condescended to the lowest conditions of life; Luke 22:27.³⁵

(*Benson Commentary*, Phil. 2:8) *He humbled himself*— ... “The reasoning in this passage is beautiful. The Son of God did not proudly continue in his high station, but descended from it for a while, and placed himself in the lowest condition among men, serving every one with the humility and assiduity of a servant, or bondman, as δούλος signifies. Then, in obedience to his Father, (John 6:38,³⁶) he finished his services by suffering the painful and ignominious death of the cross as a malefactor, for the salvation of the world.

Ephesians 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

As revealed here, Jesus was not merely a teacher of divine law but also *abolished in his [own] flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 2:15) *In his flesh* — By the sacrifice of his body on the cross. It was not by instruction merely; it was not by communicating the knowledge of God; it was not as a teacher; it was not by the mere exertion of power; it was by his flesh—his human nature—and this can mean only that he did it by his sacrifice of himself.

The Greek word for *abolish* is #2673 *katargeó*. The word is defined by *Strong's* as “to render inoperative, abolish.” Its usage is “(a) I make idle (inactive), make of no effect, annul, abolish, bring to naught, (b) I discharge, sever, separate from.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines *katargeó* “(from 2596 /*katá*, ‘down to a point,’ intensifying 691 /*argéō*, ‘inactive, idle’) – properly, idle down, rendering something inert (‘completely inoperative’); i.e. being of no effect (totally without force, completely brought down); done away with, cause to cease and therefore abolish; make invalid, abrogate (bring to naught); ‘to make idle or inactive.’” The means by which Jesus abolished the law was His death on the cross, fulfilling its judgment for sin, and then ultimately creating *one new man, so making peace.*

To make in himself of twain one new man. The *new man* spoken of is that new nature that Christ baptizes His people with, the Holy Spirit.³⁷ This new spiritual and holy

33 I John 4:14 *And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. John 4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

34 Phil. 2:7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

35 Luke 22:27 *For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*

36 John 6:38 *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

37 John 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

nature, which is spoken of as the *new man*, is also defined in Scripture as the Spirit of God's Son. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6). It is by the impartation of this divine and holy nature, whose source is God's Son, that Jew and Gentile are united to each other³⁸ and together become united to God. It is also this bearing of the image of the heavenly,³⁹ through receiving the same holy nature as God, that transcends the law of sin and death.⁴⁰ Through being born of God⁴¹ sinners are lifted from all things earthly and carnal, including all the sin in their previous life. To become a child of God transcends all previous relationship with God, including being the Lord's servant, as Israel was revealed to be in God's eyes.⁴² What can also be observed is the close proximity that the Savior plays in His people's deliverance, wherein both Christ's personal death and then Christ's spiritually resurrected life are transmitted to the saved. As with Moses, when the Lord took the Spirit that was upon Him and gave it to the seventy,⁴³ so has God taken the Spirit of the resur-

rected Lord Jesus Christ and imparted it to those who have placed their faith and trust in Him. All therefore is centered upon Jesus—first His earthly death and then His resurrected life—revealing the special role the Lord has displayed in saving His people. Christ's people's salvation is secure, because it is His own bodily death and then resurrected life that actually save them. It is also Christ's death and then His life that ultimately produce the one body of Christ. From then the body and Spirit of the Savior is the body of His redeemed formed.

Ephesians 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

It is in Christ, God's Son alone, that sinners can find true reconciliation with God. All salvation and reconciliation with God must originate in Him, and there is no true salvation apart from Him.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Eph. 2:16) Translate, "might altogether reconcile them both in one body (the Church,

Acts 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

38 *I Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Eph. 4:5-6 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 'One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

39 *I Cor. 15:48-49 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 'And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

40 *Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

41 *John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

I John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

42 *Isa. 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*

Isa. 44:1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

Isa. 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

Luke 1:54 He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

43 *Num. 11:25 And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.*

Col 3:15⁴⁴) unto God through His cross.” The Greek for “reconcile” (*apocatalaxe*), found only here and in Col 1:20,⁴⁵ expresses not only a return to favor with one (*catallage*), but so to lay aside enmity that complete amity follows; to pass from enmity to complete reconciliation [Tittmann].

The Greek word for *reconcile* is #604 *apokatallassó*, which is defined by *Strong’s* as “to reconcile completely.” Its usage is “I reconcile, change from one state of feeling to another.” The origin of the word is #575 *apo*, “from, away from” and # 2644 *katallassó*, “to reconcile.” From these definitions it can be seen that Christ’s reconciliation of the saved involved transforming the state of those separated and estranged from God to being joined to God. Sin separates man from the Lord; Christ removes sin, so that man might be one together again with Him.

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 2:16) *Having slain the enmity* — Not only the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but the enmity between the sinner and God. He has by that death removed all the obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God and on the part of man. It is made efficacious in removing the enmity of the sinner against God, and producing peace.

Thereby — Margin, “in himself.” The meaning is, in his cross, or by means of his cross.

Just as Jesus was slain on a tree, so did Jesus “slay” (using the same terminology) both sin and law, which separated the sinner from God. In reality Christ’s death on the cross is the death of everything that has separated men from their Creator, and so much so that those things are now considered dead and of no effect. This includes the sin that separated man

from God, and the law, which brought judgment upon man for it.

(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers* Eph. 2:16) **By the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.**—In this verse (in accordance with the context) “the enmity,” which by His death He “slew,” is the barrier between God and man, created by sin, but brought out by the Law, as hard and rigid law, “in ordinances” of which St. Paul does not hesitate to say that “sin took occasion by it,” and “by it slew” man (Romans 7:11). This is illustrated by the cognate, though different, metaphor of Colossians 2:14, where it is said of Christ that He “blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary unto us, and took it out of the way, *nailing it to His cross.*” Compare also, in Galatians 2:19-20, the connection of spiritual “death to the Law” with our partaking of our Lord’s crucifixion: “I, through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. *I am crucified with Christ*, nevertheless I live. . . . by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and *gave Himself for me.*” By His death Christ has both redeemed us from sin, and also “redeemed (properly, *bought*) us from the curse of the Law” (Galatians 3:13).

It is the body of Jesus Christ that establishes peace between Jew and Gentile and brings both together, resulting in the creation of the mystical body of Christ. Through Christ’s sacrifice for sin, a heavenly body, a heavenly congregation, has been created, in whom all sin has been removed and complete and thorough reconciliation with God has been made. Because the body of Christ originates in the Savior, He righteously and by divine decree has been made its Head. *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him*

44 Col. 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

45 Col 1:20 *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

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should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Col. 1:18–20). Christ's own body is the genesis of the creation of the body of Christ.⁴⁶ It is this church, this assembly, that is referred to as a *glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish* (Eph. 5:27b). The Greek word that describes this heavenly congregation is *ἐκκλησίαν* # 1577. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as—

“properly, people called out from the world and to God, the outcome being the *Church* (the mystical *body of Christ*) – i.e. the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls out from the world and into His eternal kingdom.

[The English word “church” comes from the Greek word *kyriakos*, “belonging to the Lord” (*kyrios*).”]

Ephesians 2:17 *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

The *peace* that Jesus preached both on the earth⁴⁷ and to those He has called to God through Himself is the zenith of what Christ's death has accomplished for the redeemed. It is for this reason that every church epistle opens with the accomplishments of our Lord's ministry,⁴⁸ introducing the *grace* and *peace* produced through His redemptive work. This is why all those troubled by sin can immediately and without delay experience peace with God, through belief in God's Son. The degree of a man's sin before Christ matters not, only that he places his faith in the One Who is fully able and willing to completely deliver him from it.⁴⁹ In the

⁴⁶ Rom. 12:4–5 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

Col. 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

Eph. 4:10 *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

I Cor. 12:18–20 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

¹⁹ *And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.*

⁴⁷ Luke 24:36 *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

John 20:19, 21, 26 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ... Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. ... And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.*

⁴⁸ Rom. 1:7 *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I Cor. 1:3 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

II Cor. 1:2 *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Gal. 1:3 *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Eph. 1:2 *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Phil. 1:2 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Col. 1:2 *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I Thess. 1:1 *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

II Thess. 1:2 *Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

⁴⁹ Matt. 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

I John 2:2 *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

end both the pagan and the pious need peace to be established between them and the Lord—simply because it is not a man's piety that saves him but rather the piety of He upon Whom he has believed. It is also this peace that is to be preached today and which the apostle desired to be made known, revealed, and ultimately trusted in by the Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 2:18) The unity of the whole Church, as united "to the Father," "through the Son," and "in the Spirit," is here summed up in one sentence, but with as much perfection and clearness as even when it is unfolded in the great passage below (Ephesians 4:4-6).⁵⁰

It is *through him*, the Son of God, that those born in sin *have access by one Spirit unto the Father*. Undoubtedly this includes both Jew and Gentile. The means by which access to the Father is given is Christ, and the possession of the Holy

Spirit, Whom He imparts to the saved. Through the sending forth of this divine Spirit,⁵¹ circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles are united, and both are provided access to the Father. Yet this is also why if a man has not the Spirit of Christ, then God considers him none of His own. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Rom. 8:9). To enter God's presence, one must possess His Holy Spirit. To think that we could enter into heaven otherwise, without this Spirit, is to be ignorant of the plan of salvation itself. Thus, whereas the saint has reason to rejoice that through Christ the Spirit has been given to him, the sinner should fear that without possession of the Holy Spirit, God is not his and he is not God's. To therefore be counted a true son of God, a man must be born again⁵² and given the same nature as God. It is this Holy Spirit who through the death and resurrection of God's only begotten Son establishes true relationship with the Father and eternal access to His holy presence.

I Pet. 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

⁵⁰ *Eph. 4:4-6 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵¹One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* ⁵¹ *Eph. 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

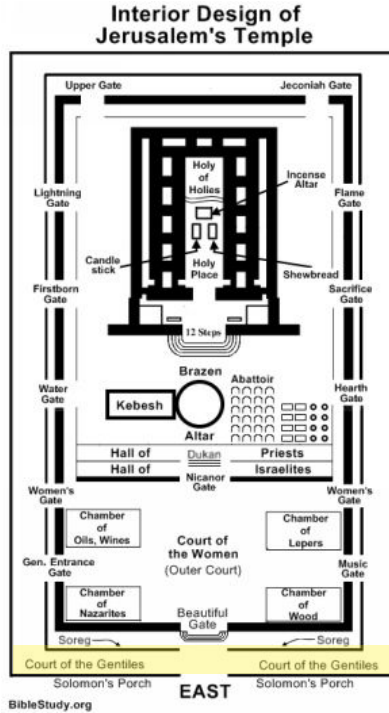
⁵² *John 3:3-7 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Endnote

i



To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 8

Ephesians 2:19–22

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

IT is ultimately through Christ's blood and the Spirit He sends that provides the right to become part of God's household, and a member of His heavenly family. It is here that the great grace bestowed upon the sinner is most evident; when the wrath of God has been so reversed that those previously deserving His anger are now by divine grace made His sons; where an enemy of God has by inestimable favor been made a child of God. This is the ultimate reality of what being saved by God truly entails. To be

counted as one of His house and a member of His household is to be reckoned as one of His own. To be made a son is to be made to share in the Lord's own eternal life¹ and be reckoned as a part of His heavenly coming kingdom.² It is also spiritual sonship, which produces becoming an heir of God,³ that receiving the Holy Spirit confirms. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6). God is Spirit,⁴ and they that have been made to become the sons of God are imparted with the very same spiritual nature as Him. This transformation, which is described in Scripture as regeneration,⁵ occurs once a man has been born again,⁶ born from above, and

1 *John 5:16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

2 *Col. 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

3 *Rom. 8:13–14 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Eph. 1:13–14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

I Pet. 1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Tit. 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Col. 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

4 *John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

5 *Tit. 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

6 *John 3:3–7 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,*

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through divine grace⁷ has been made a child of God. Through faith in the Son, and reception of Him as Lord, is the power, authority, and right given to become sons of God ourselves. It is reception of the Son of God that provides the privilege to be accounted as a member of God's house and regarded as a member of His very intimate and cherished family. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name* (John 1:12).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 1:12) *Sons of God* — Children of God by adoption. See the notes at Matthew 1:1.⁸ Christians are called sons of God:

1. Because they are "adopted" by Him, 1 John 3:1.⁹
2. Because they are "like Him;" they resemble Him and have His spirit.
3. They are united to the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, are regarded by Him as his brethren Matthew 25:40,¹⁰ and are therefore regarded as the children of the Most High.

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

To place anything under one's faith other than the One God reveals is the Author of all true faith¹¹ is to guarantee personal unsteadiness and persistent spiritual wandering. *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man,*¹² and nowhere more so than in the formation of his religion.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 2:20) that the traditions of people have no authority in the church, and constitute no part of the foundation.

In the church of Jesus Christ the only real and legitimate authority is Christ. It is He Whom God has placed as the cornerstone of His heavenly structure, and He through Whom all new members are added. At the foundation of the church of God is the person and ministry of God's Son, Jesus Christ being the *chief cornerstone*. Upon Jesus Christ, the apostle states, are those divinely appointed spiritual ministries, which Christ has given as gifts to the church.¹³ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Eph.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

I John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

7 Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

8 Matt. 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

9 I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

10 Matt. 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

11 Heb. 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

12 Jer. 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

13 Eph. 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

4:11–13). These ministries cannot be entered into through mere religious training and/or acquired theological degrees. To do so would negate what the Scriptures clearly reveal—that it is the Lord Who both sets and places all members in His body as it as pleases Him,¹⁴ therefore not the members choosing their offices, as it has pleased them.¹⁵ One of the great evidences of true, divinely appointed ministries in Christ's church is their manifesting varying degrees of spiritual power.¹⁶ Since it is Jesus Christ Who both sends and inspires the ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers*, then varying degrees of the power of the Spirit will be evidenced in their lives. *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will* (I Cor. 12:7–11). It is this spiritual power, seen both in Christ's ministries and in members of His church, that gives credibility to both spiritual sonship and heavenly ordination. Those involved in false ministries, though, who lack the powerful influences of the Spirit, have no other option than leaning upon *good words and fair speeches* in an attempt to deceive the elect. Those who promote counterfeit ministries serve not

the Lord Jesus Christ but their own bellies. *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple* (Rom. 16:18). It is only those who lack the power of the Spirit in their ministries who must rely on smooth talk, good words, and flattering speeches to maintain their religious influence. Ultimately, all who claim to come in Christ's name and are led by His Spirit should be tried to determine if they really are Christ's and have been divinely sent to speak for Him. If there is not spiritual power in their ministries, then you can be certain that they have no true relationship with the very One to Whom all power and authority in heaven and on earth have been given.¹⁷ *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world* (I John 4:1).

(Benson Commentary, I John 4:1) *Believe not every spirit* — By which any teacher is, or professes to be, actuated: or, believe not every teacher who pretends to be inspired by the Spirit of God; *but try the spirits* — Namely, *whether they are of God* — By the rule which God hath given. We are to try all spirits by the written word: *To the law and to the testimony!* If any man speak not according to these, the spirit which actuates him is not of God. *Because many false prophets* — Or false teachers; *are gone forth into the world* — With an intention to draw disciples after them.

If Jesus Christ is not the head¹⁸ of His body or the cornerstone of the temple of the Lord, then whatever else is carnally

14 I Cor. 12:18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

15 Heb. 5:4 *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

16 Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

17 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

18 Col. 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Eph. 1:22–23 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

²³*Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

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constructed cannot be reckoned as of the Lord. *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ* (I Cor. 3:11). Consequently, if the Son of God is not the foundation of a man's faith, then his faith is inevitably vain. If his foundation is wrong, so also is everything else that is constructed upon it. To place as a cornerstone, or the foundation of faith, anything other than Jesus Christ is to guarantee that what is being erected, does not have its legitimate source in God and will inescapably be judged by Him. *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire* (I Cor. 3:13–15).

(Pulpit Commentary, I Cor. 3:13) *Each man's work shall be made manifest.* The real nature—the worth or worthlessness—of each man's work, will be made clear sooner or

later. *The day shall declare it.* “The day” can only mean “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:8),¹⁹ which would specially “make manifest the counsels of the hearts” (1 Corinthians 4:5),²⁰ and “judge the secrets of men” (Romans 2:16),²¹ and make all men manifest “before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:10).²² It shall be revealed by fire; rather, because it is being revealed in fire.

The Greek word for *cornerstone* in Ephesians 2:20 is #204 *akrogóniaios*. *Strong's* defines the word as “at the extreme angle or corner.” *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* states of the word, “For as the cornerstone holds together two walls, so Christ joins together as Christians, into one body dedicated to God, those who were formerly Jews and Gentiles.”

Many Scripture references detail the *head of the corner* or *corner stone* of true religion.²³ But there are also many who have deemed the Son of God unfit as their Lord and remain unwilling to place themselves under His government.²⁴ It is this that the Scripture refers to when it states, *The stone which the builders rejected, the same*

*Eph. 4:15–16 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*¹⁶*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Eph. 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

19 *I Cor. 1:8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

20 *I Cor. 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

21 *Rom. 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

22 *II Cor. 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

23 *Ps. 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*

Mark 12:10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

Luke 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. I Pet. 2:6–7 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. ⁷Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

24 *Rev. 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

is become the head of the corner. What this reveals is that not only out of religion but also in it will be multitudes who attempt to build institutions and/or religious movements who have themselves rejected Him Whom God has revealed all true faith must rest upon. Instead of following God’s plan for Christian ministry, they invent their own. Instead of placing Jesus Christ as the foundation of their faith, they substitute things far inferior to Him.

Matthew 21:42 *Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?*

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Matt. 21:42) *Which the builders rejected* — On account of its want of beauty or size it was laid aside, or deemed unfit to be a cornerstone. This represents the Lord Jesus, proposed to the Jews as the foundation or cornerstone on which to build the church, but rejected by them—the builders—on account of his lack of comeliness or beauty; that is, of what they esteemed to be comely or desirable, Isaiah 53:2–3.²⁵

The same is become ... — Though rejected by them, yet God chose him, and made him the foundation of the church. Christ is often compared to a stone, a cornerstone, a tried, that is, a sure, firm foundation—all in allusion to the custom of building, Acts 4:11; Romans 9:33; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:7.²⁶

Lord’s doing — The appointment of Jesus of Nazareth to be the foundation of the church

is proved by miracle and prophecy to be the work of God.

Isaiah 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

History confirms the significance of a cornerstone in respect to ancient buildings’ structures.

(*Back to the Bible*, “Building on the Cornerstone”) Historically, the cornerstone was the most important part of any building. The total weight of an edifice rested on this particular stone, which, if removed, would collapse the whole structure. The cornerstone was also the key to keeping the walls straight. The builders would take sightings along the edges of this part of the building. If the cornerstone was set properly, the stonemasons could be assured that all the other corners of the building would be at the appropriate angles as well. Thus, the cornerstone became a symbol for that which held life together. ... The New Testament writers recognized that this stone was Jesus Christ. ...

When the pressures of life bear down on you, there’s only one cornerstone capable of handling the weight. When your need for guidance is urgent, there’s only one cornerstone you can trust to keep your life straight. That cornerstone is Jesus. Trust Him with every aspect of your lives, and you will find that He never fails. He’s not just a Rock; He’s the Cornerstone.²⁷

Just as those for whom Christ is not the *cornerstone* of their faith are continually unstable, equally true is that those who

²⁵ Isa. 53:2–3 *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. ³He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

²⁶ Rom. 9:33 *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

²⁷ “Building on the Cornerstone.” *Back to the Bible*, 23 Jan. 2019, www.backtothebible.org/post/building-on-the-cornerstone.

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actually hold Jesus Christ in His rightful position in their hearts and lives will be established in the faith²⁸ and made to increase and grow even stronger in it. If a man's foundation is truly Jesus Christ, then all that is built upon Him has the spiritual promise of also remaining.²⁹

The last part of Isaiah 28:16 reads, *He that believeth shall not make haste*. Other translations contribute to a more understandable translation of these words.

(NIV) *So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic.*

(NLT) *Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken.*

(Berean Standard Bible) *So this is what the Lord GOD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; the one who believes will never be shaken.*

(New American Standard Bible) *Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: "Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a tested stone, A precious cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. The one who believes in it will not be disturbed.*

(Holman Christian Standard Bible) *Therefore the Lord GOD said: "Look, I have laid*

a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; the one who believes will be unshakable.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 28:16) A sure Foundation, upon whom you may securely rest; one who will not fail nor deceive you, as your lying refuges will. . . .

shall not make haste; shall not make more haste than he ought, or, as we say, more haste than good speed; shall not hastily and greedily catch at any way of escaping his danger, whether it be right or wrong, but shall patiently wait upon God in his way till he deliver him.

The essence of this verse is that those who place their faith and trust in the one Whom God has made the cornerstone of all true religion, the Son of God, will neither be shaken, troubled, nor stricken with fear and/or disappointed in their spiritual expectations. Because it is God Who has laid the stone, then he who places his full faith and trust in Him should never be panicked that the Lord will disavow him, nor that the religion he practices will crumble under his feet. The Lord's foundation stone is secure; it has been tested; it is of the best material, and as such, it is able to bear whatever weight is placed upon it. This undoubtedly includes not only the trials of this life but also the Lord's judgment of all faith and works in the next.³⁰ To properly believe upon the Son of God is to be confident that the religion practiced will be accepted and upheld by God. If our foundation is right, we can be certain that the Lord will assist us in all other future spiritual needs, as well as in advancing the gospel itself.

28 Acts 16:5 *And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*

29 John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

30 I Cor. 3:13-15 *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

It is not just that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of a building, but that He is also the cornerstone of that building that is fitly framed and purposed to be *an holy temple in the Lord*. This heavenly edifice is continually being added to: it is growing, and it will be completed as the true temple of the Lord and a habitation of God through the Spirit (v. 22)—a temple wherein God dwells, not only in each and every member but also in all the members of His house collectively. In the Old Testament the Lord's presence was first revealed in the tabernacle of Moses³¹ and then in the temple of Solomon. In the New Testament the spiritual presence of the Lord resides in His people. *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people* (II Cor. 6:16). The believer's greatest desire is to dwell with God.³² This desire is fulfilled when God makes His abode, comes to abide in the believer³³ through the impartation of receiving the Christ Spirit. The temple of

the Lord, therefore, is the body of saints, whom Christ has sanctified and made to become God's heavenly sons. It is in this temple also that God will be properly worshiped and His Son righteously revered.³⁴

Ephesians 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The *in whom* of which the church is being *builded together for an habitation of God* is Jesus Christ. It is both in Him and through Him that believers are being built and joined together to become a holy temple of the Lord. The means by which this construction is taking place is through the impartation of the *Spirit*. Consequently, through the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, who is sent through Him,³⁵ is a mighty and eternal spiritual construction project underway. This holy temple surpasses the beauty of Solomon's temple, for the stones that constitute it are *living stones*, in contrast to the building materials that Solomon used, which were mere earthly blocks made of limestone or some other natural material. The temple of Christ is therefore superior in every respect to any earthly religious structure ever constructed before it since the building materials being used are *living stones*,

31 Exod. 25:8 *And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*

Exod. 40:34–38 *Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.* ³⁵*And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.* ³⁶*And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys.* ³⁷*But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.* ³⁸*For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

32 Ps. 27:4 *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

33 John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

I John 4:12–13 *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* ¹³*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

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

35 John 14:25–26 *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.* ²⁶*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

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representative of a living God.³⁶ *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ* (I Pet. 2:5). These *living stones* are “Quickened and made alive to God by spiritual life derived from him.”³⁷ Ultimately the Lord’s holy temple is being constructed through life derived from Him. From His own spiritual and eternal life are members added to form His heavenly abode.

(Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, I Pet. 2:5) All history is the process of building up a “spiritual palace” out of a regenerate humanity, in order that, in the end, the Father Himself may occupy it.

Like all competent builders, by whom the relevant materials are carefully selected, so is Christ adding God’s chosen³⁸ to the Lord’s house. The plans for constructing this holy temple were devised before the world began.³⁹ It was in God’s foreknowledge long before any earthly and/or physical structures were ever imagined. These were only types of a much greater and heavenly spiritual edifice to come. It is also because of this that Moses was divinely instructed to fashion everything in exactly the fashion shown to Him. By this it is illustrated that both what and where the Lord has purposed He shall dwell, He must first build. This is espe-

cially true concerning the mystical and celestial body of Christ, which constitutes the true temple of the Lord. Ultimately all temple building, and all materials used in the place where God will dwell, must be according to divine will, without any human thought, reason, or imagination contributing to it. This was true in the Old Testament; it is equally true in the New. In order to build anything either of or for the Lord, the Lord Himself must first lay out the pattern for the building. In reality, all Christianity, and all that comprises the church of Christ, is the work of God, and as such, human reason should never be elevated above divine revelation, nor should the thoughts of man hold any preeminence in the Lord’s holy assembly. Practically speaking, the church of Jesus Christ should never be run or governed by anything other than the words and Spirit of Christ. It is the Lord’s temple, not man’s, and as such it should be respected as the work of God and left to be governed solely by Him. *Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount* (Heb. 8:5).

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Heb. 8:5) For, see, saith he — Exodus 25:9, Exodus 25:40; Ex-

³⁶ Jer. 10:10 *But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.*

³⁷ Matt. 16:16 *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

³⁸ I Tim. 3:14–15 *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: ¹⁵But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

³⁹ John 6:57 *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

³⁶ Benson Commentary, I Pet. 2:5

³⁸ Eph. 1:4–5 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

³⁹ Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

odus 26:30.⁴⁰ In Exodus 11:1–10,⁴¹ it is also repeatedly said that Moses executed all the work of the tabernacle as he had been commanded. Great care was taken that an exact copy should be exhibited to him of all which he was to make, and that the work should be exactly like the pattern. The reason doubtless was, that as the Jewish service was to be typical, none but God could judge of the form in which the tabernacle should be made. It was not to be an edifice of architectural beauty, skill, or taste, but was designed to adumbrate important realities which were known only to God. Hence, it was needful that the exact model of them should be given to Moses, and that it should be scrupulously followed.

That thou make all things — Not only the tabernacle itself, but the altars, the ark, the candlestick, etc. The form and materials for each were specified, and the exact pattern shown to Moses in the mount.

According to the pattern — Greek τύπον *tupon*— “type;” that is, figure, form. The

word τύπος *typos*, “type,” means properly anything produced by the agency or means of “blows” (from τύπτω *typtō*, “to strike”); hence, a mark, stamp, print, impression — as that made by driving nails in the hands John 20:25⁴² ... This is the meaning here. The allusion is to a pattern such as an architect or sculptor uses; a drawing, or figure made in wood or clay, after which the work is to be modelled. The idea is, that some such drawing or model was exhibited to Moses by God on mount Sinai, so that he might have an exact idea of the tabernacle which was to be made. A similar drawing or model of the temple was given by David to Solomon; 1 Chronicles 28:11-12.⁴³ We are not indeed to suppose that there was in the case of the pattern shown to Moses, any miniature model of wood or stone actually created and exhibited, but that the form of the tabernacle was exhibited to Moses in vision (note, Isaiah 1:1⁴⁴), or was so vividly impressed on his mind that he would have a distinct view of the edifice which was to be reared.

40 Exod. 25:9 *According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.*

Exod. 25:40 *And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.*

Exod. 26:30 *And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.*

41 Exod. 11:1–10 *And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. ²Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold. ³And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people. ⁴And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: ⁵And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. ⁶And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. ⁷But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. ⁸And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger. ⁹And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. ¹⁰And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.*

42 John 20:25 *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the LORD. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

43 1 Chr. 28:11-12 *Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasures thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, ¹²And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasures of the house of God, and of the treasures of the dedicated things:*

44 Isa. 1:1 *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.*

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In the mount — In mount Sinai; for it was while Moses was there in the presence of God, that these communications were made.

Just as Moses was divinely instructed as to how the Lord's earthly tabernacle was to be constructed, as well as all the religious articles to be used in it, so also should the same spiritual diligence be exercised in the Lord's living church today—teaching us that all that is God's should be constructed and governed only by God. Hence, where the Lord dwells, which includes the church of His Son, all must be performed solely according to divine will and inspiration. Nothing is left to man, nor should any room be left to human reason or thinking. If this is sinfully done, then all that which is being constructed is undoubtedly the work of man; it is no longer the work of God. To therefore assist in building anything either for the Lord or of the Lord, the Lord must lay the plans as to how it is to be constructed. If this principal were applied consistently to Christian ministry today, then nothing of man would ever be allowed to take precedence over the revealed Word and will of God. To do so only guarantees that the Lord is no longer in the work, though His name will commonly be used as if He still is.

The Word of God also speaks of the dangerous and fatal consequences of any who defile the temple of God, which consists of the members of Christ's church, in whom the Lord's Spirit now dwells. *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are* (I Cor. 3:17).

The Greek word for both *defile* and *destroy* is #5351 *phtheiró*. The word is defined by Strong's as "to destroy, corrupt, spoil."

HELPS Word-studies defines the word "properly, waste away, corrupt (deteriorate); (figuratively) to cause or experience *moral deterioration* — i.e. decomposition (break-down), due to the *corrupting influence of sin*." These definitions reveal that if sin is introduced in this holy temple—purposed to corrode its beauty, mar its holiness, and/or promote moral deterioration—then God will destroy and spoil both all and any who do so. To defile the Lord's temple, where His Spirit abides, undoubtedly includes building upon any other foundation than that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ From the context this defiling can also include introducing envying, strife, and divisions into Christ's church,⁴⁶ which God has made to be spiritually *one*. *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all* (Eph. 4:4–6). The warning is clear and unmistakable, that to defile the temple of God, that is, the church of God, is to invite misery and ultimately destruction to oneself. For any who seek to mar and defile this holy sanctuary—which the Lord is constructing through His Son—by injuring its members and/or hindering Christ's work will themselves be both marred and destroyed by God.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 3:17) If any man defile ... — Or, "destroy, corrupt" (φθείρει phtheirei). The Greek word is the same in both parts of the sentence. "If any man 'destroy' the temple of God, God shall 'destroy' him." This is presented in the form of an adage or proverb. And the truth here stated is based on the fact that the temple of God was inviolable. That temple was holy; and if any man subsequently destroyed it, it might be presumed that God would destroy him. The figurative sense is, "If any man by

⁴⁵ I Cor. 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

⁴⁶ I Cor. 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

his doctrines or precepts shall pursue such a course as tends to destroy the church, God shall severely punish him.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Cor. 3:17) *Which temple ye are.*—Literally, *the which are ye*, “which” referring rather to holy than to the temple; the argument being that as they are “holy” by the indwelling of God’s Spirit, therefore they are the temple of God. As God commanded the punishment of death to be inflicted on whoever defiled the actual Temple (see Exodus 28:43; Leviticus 16:2),⁴⁷ because it was holy unto the Lord, and His presence dwelt there; so they, having the same Spirit in them, were a temple also holy unto the Lord, and God would not leave him unpunished who destroyed or marred this spiritual temple.

This verse should be a grim reminder to any and all who do not hold proper re-

spect for the work of Jesus Christ in building a habitation of God through adding *living stones*,⁴⁸ compromising those whom Christ has saved, wherein the Lord both does and will dwell. The Lord is jealous,⁴⁹ and nowhere more so than in protecting those in whom both His Spirit and His presence currently abide. This is why to corrupt or defile God’s house is to invite God’s wrath upon oneself, revealing to us the great care and love that God has for all those called to His name. For just as He is holy,⁵⁰ so also are those whom Christ has redeemed and purposed to become the Lord’s eternal and holy dwelling place. To defile the church of Christ, the temple of God, is to ultimately defile the Lord Himself—simply because it is His own holy nature that lives within His people.

47 Exod. 28:43 *And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.*

Lev. 16:2 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.*

48 Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

49 Exod. 34:14 *For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Exod. 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; Deut. 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*

Deut. 6:15 *(For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.*

50 I Pet. 1:15–16 *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

Ps. 99:9 *Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.*

Lev. 11:44 *For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

Lev. 19:2 *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.*

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Chapter 9

Ephesians 3:1–5

Ephesians 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

THE Greek word for prisoner is #1198 *desmios*. Strong's Concordance defines the word as "a captive (as bound) — in bonds, prisoner." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines the word as "bound, in bonds, a captive, a prisoner." The word is used in Matthew 27:16; Mark 15:6; Acts 28:16;¹ and other scriptures. When the apostle spoke these words they were true both figuratively and literally. The apostle was bound to his call, just as he was prisoner, and bodily held captive in Rome.^{2,1} What Paul's captivity in Rome reveals is the great extent that the apostle was willing to suffer for the expansion of the gospel. In both body and soul he consented to being bound, in order that the great revelation of Christ's resurrection, ascension, and glorification might be fully proclaimed in the world. In seeking to make known his Christ, the apostle was willing to endure the imprisonment of himself. So great was Paul's love for the truth that he was willing to sacrifice his own bodily

freedom for it. To Paul, his own life was not nearly as important as the ministry that he had received from the Lord Jesus: (Acts 20:24) *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 20:24) *Neither count I my life* — I do not consider my life as so valuable as to be retained by turning away from bonds and persecutions. I am certain of bonds and afflictions; I am willing also, if it be necessary, to lay down my life in the prosecution of the same purpose.

Dear unto myself — So precious or valuable as to be retained at the sacrifice of duty. I am willing to sacrifice it if it be necessary. This was the spirit of the Saviour, and of all the early Christians. Duty is of more importance than life; and when either duty or life is to be sacrificed, life is to be cheerfully surrendered.

There is nothing more precious that a man can give than his life. This was visible in

¹ Matt. 27:16 *And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.*

Mark 15:6 *Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.*

Acts 28:16 *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.*

² Acts 28:16 *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.*

Acts 28:30–31 *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, ³¹Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*

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the Savior;³ it was equally manifest in the apostles He chose to bear His name. At the base of all true ministry is a heart of selflessness. Ultimately none will ever be effective in ministry than those willing to suffer loss and sacrifice for it. At their core, true Christians must be generous Christians. It is this that Christ demands of His followers, and this that His followers will not hesitate to demand of themselves.

For this cause. The cause spoken of concerns what has just been mentioned in the previous verses. It entails the Ephesians being included in the building of the Lord's holy temple, wherein God shall eternally dwell, through the Spirit, both in and among His people. This revelation at the time was considered new revelation, detailing the heavenly construction of a holy albeit spiritual temple, having Jesus Christ as its cornerstone and proclaimed through the apostles and prophets, whom Christ had sent. In this divine, holy, and eternal structure the Lord will be worshiped and praised as He justly deserves to be. Understandably, for the Lord, Who is Spirit, to be properly worshiped, there needed to be created spiritual beings born of the same nature as Him,⁴ whereby through His own holy, spiritual nature He could be worshiped in the purity and holiness that alone are worthy of Him. *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth* (John 4:24).

(*Benson Commentary*, John 4:24) If we do not worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit, we neither give him the glory due to his name, and so do not perform a real and proper act of worship, nor can we hope to attain his favour, and acceptance with him, and so we miss the end of worship.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, John 4:24) *God is a Spirit.*—Better, God is spirit. His will has been expressed in the seeking. But His very nature and essence is spirit, and it follows from this that all true worship must be spiritual.

The day of Pentecost—which was that day the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking with divers kinds of tongues the wonderful works of God⁵—is the first New Testament example of spiritual worship, produced through the inspiration and prompting of the Spirit in Christ's followers. The book of Acts records this earth-shattering and stunning event: *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance* (Acts 2:1–4) Once the apostles were filled with the

3 John 10:11 *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

Matt. 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

1 Tim. 2:5–6 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ⁶Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

Tit. 2:14 *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

1 Pet. 2:24 *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

4 Ezek. 11:19–20 *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: ²⁰That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

5 Acts 2:11 *Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

Holy Spirit, the Spirit prompted, inspired, and enabled them to speak clearly and distinctly in the languages of the people present concerning the glorious work that God had accomplished through His Son. The sending of the Spirit was one of the last promises of the Son of God⁶ and practically fulfilled His earthly mission of saving those called to God through Himself. Jesus also prophesied how His followers would speak with new tongues,⁷ providing even more enlightenment to the prophecy in Isaiah 28:11: *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.* The difference between the prophecy in Isaiah and what is observed in Acts is that in Isaiah the foreign tongues spoken by the Assyrian conquerors would accomplish what Israel's tongue could not. Thus, captivity by a foreign power, who spoke a foreign language, would instruct Israel where God's prophets had failed. Because Israel had refused to hear God's voice through those messengers sent by Him, another, more forceful and harsh nation would teach them what they stubbornly refused to believe in their own language.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 28:11) Here it means in a foreign or barbarous tongue; and the sense is, that the lessons which God wished to teach would be conveyed to them through the language of foreigners — the Chaldeans. They should be removed to a distant land, and there, in hearing a strange speech, in living long among foreigners, they should learn the lesson which they refused to do when addressed by the prophets in their own land.

What is different on the day of Pentecost is that it was not a foreign and barbaric pow-

er that would chasten Israel, reminding them to believe the truth of God's Word, but rather that it would be the faithful followers of Jesus Christ, who through their speaking in new tongues provided a glimpse of the day when all mankind, of every language and of every tongue, would worship and praise God as one. Ultimately it was evidenced on the day of Pentecost that through the giving of the Spirit of God and the unity He produces in all who receive Him, the Lord will be praised throughout the earth, whereby all peoples and all languages will glorify the Lord in one harmonious Spirit.

(*Benson Commentary*, Acts 2:4) They spake not from any previous thought, *but as the Spirit gave them utterance* — He furnished them with the matter, as well as the language. And this family, praising God together with the tongues of all the world, was an earnest that the whole world should, in due time, praise God in their various tongues.

The result of those hearing the apostles who were themselves Galileans speak the wonderful works of God in their own languages prompted them to be amazed and marvel at what they were observing. *And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:7-11).*

⁶ Acts 1:4-5 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.* ⁷For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

⁷ Mark 16:17 *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

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(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 2:11) *The wonderful works of God* — τὰ μεγάλα τοῦ Θεοῦ *ta megaleia tou Theou*. The great things of God; that is, the great things that God had done in the gift of his Son; in raising him from the dead; in his miracles, ascension, etc. Compare Luke 1:49; Psalm 71:19; Psalm 26:7; Psalm 66:3; Psalm 92:5; Psalm 104:24; etc.⁸

Undoubtedly the *wonderful works of God* spoken by the apostles, when we consider the context of events previous to the giving of the Spirit, related to Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and glorification. It was also the sending forth of the Spirit that provided proof to all upon whom He came that they were now regarded as the children of God.⁹

The day of Pentecost, which occurred fifty days after the Passover, was a reminder and celebration in the Jewish tradition¹⁰ of the law being given to Moses. It was on this ceremonious day—when all the males were required to be in Jerusalem, as they were also required to do at the other two major Jewish feasts, Passover and the Feast of tabernacles—that the Lord chose to send the prophesied Holy Spirit upon His people,¹¹ indicating the arrival of a new covenant, whereby through Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification sinners could be made righteous before God.¹² From Passover,¹³ which celebrates Israel's deliverance from Egypt, to Pentecost (the feast of weeks), which celebrated the giving of the law,¹⁴

8 Luke 1:49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

Ps. 71:19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

Ps. 26:7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

Ps. 66:3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

Ps. 92:5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

Ps. 104:24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

9 Gal. 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

10 Exod. 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

11 Isa. 32:15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

Isa. 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Joel 2:28-29 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:
²⁹And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Ezek. 36:26-27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

12 Rom. 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

II Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Phil. 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

I Cor. 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Rom. 3:21-22 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²²Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Rom. 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

13 Lev. 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's passover.

14 Lev. 23:16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

the Spirit was given to reveal that a new dispensation had arrived replacing the law. Whereas before the feast of weeks was a celebration of the giving of the Mosaic law, now it would mark and be remembered for the Lord sending the prophesied Holy Spirit through His Son.

For the gospel to quickly and fully spread, it was necessary that through a miracle of God, and the inspiration of the Spirit, the redemptive and saving ministry of the Son of God might be fully known. Because all the Israelite males were required to be at Pentecost,¹⁵ the time for sending the Spirit could not have been better. What ultimately prompted such amazement when the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ's followers was that the languages spoken by them were not known to these followers but rather were the tongues of the varying visitors at Jerusalem, who would ultimately return home and recount all the marvelous events they had both seen and heard. Thus, we see that one of the great purposes for the apostles speaking in divers kinds of tongues was for Christ's name being spread abroad. The praises of God that came out of those filled with the Spirit were in languages and dialects completely foreign to them. By this was evidenced the tremendous power of the Spirit, which enabled those who received Him to praise God both in a holiness and a beauty that prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not available. The deeper reality of this moment also revealed that now there

had arisen a new way of worshiping and praising the Lord, through the Spirit of the Lord. It is this same Holy Spirit Who lives within the children of God today, Who enables them to praise, worship, and glorify God as He rightly should be.

I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. What is remarkable about Paul defining himself as a *prisoner of Jesus Christ* is that to truly spread a knowledge of the freedom found in the Son of God,¹⁶ those ministers sent by Him must forfeit their own personal freedom. Consequently, Paul's personal ministry demonstrates that for the gospel to fully spread and become made known to the world, it is necessary that those called to ministry bind themselves to their call—revealing that for sinners to be set free, it is essential that others who themselves have been chosen by Jesus Christ become bound to the Lord's call for their lives. It is this denial of self that is the foundation of becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ. It is also this selflessness that is critical for believers to carry their cross in advancing the gospel throughout the world. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me* (Matt. 16:24).

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 16:24) Let him deny himself, and take up his cross.—Our common thoughts of "self-denial," *i.e.*, the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny

¹⁵ Exod. 23:14-17 *Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. ¹⁵Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty.) ¹⁶And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. ¹⁷Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God.*

¹⁶ Luke 4:18 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

II Cor. 3:17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

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his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. If he does not so deny himself, he is in danger, as Peter was (it is significant that the same word is used in both instances), of denying his Lord. The self-denial here commanded has, accordingly, its highest type and pattern in the act by which the Son of God, in becoming man, “emptied Himself (see Note on Philippians 2:7¹⁷) of all that constituted, if we may so speak, the “self” of His divine nature.

Ephesians 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

The apostle Paul’s ordination had specific relationship to the Gentiles and the door opening for their salvation,¹⁸ through faith in the Son of God and being made new creatures through Him. It is this that entails *the dispensation of the grace of God*.¹⁹ No doubt, Paul was fully aware of

the great spiritual responsibility entrusted to him by the Son of God. It was for this reason that he counted it an inestimable privilege to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, even if it both entailed and required his own imprisonment. The great honor of being chosen²⁰ to bear Christ’s name, the apostle realized, was solely because of grace.²¹ It was also for the purpose of helping the unsaved believe that Paul was willing to allow his own life to be both bound and held captive. Knowing that faith is precious²² is what ultimately inspired the apostle to give his own life in service to the Son of God so that others might also believe and be saved through Him. *Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness* (Tit. 1:1).

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Tit. 1:1) *According to the faith of God’s elect* — Compare the Romans 8:33 note; Ephesians 1:4 note;

17 Phil. 2:7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

18 I Tim. 2:7 *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

II Tim. 1:11 *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

Eph. 3:8-9 *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; ⁹And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:*

Gal. 2:8 *(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)*

Acts 22:21 *And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

19 II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Gal. 6:15 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

Eph. 4:23-24 *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

Col. 3:10 *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

Rom. 7:6 *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*

20 I Cor. 3:10 *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

21 Gal. 1:15-16 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

Gal. 2:9 *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.*

22 II Pet. 1:1 *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:*

2 Timothy 2:10 note.²³ The meaning of the word rendered here, “according to” — *κατά kata* — is, probably, with reference to; that is, he was appointed to be an apostle with respect to the faith of those whom God had chosen, or, in order that they might be led to believe the gospel. God had chosen them to salvation, but he intended that it should be in connection with their believing, and, in order to that, he had appointed Paul to be an apostle that he might go and make known to them the gospel. It is the purpose of God to save His people, but he does not mean to save them as infidels, or unbelievers. He intends that they shall be believers first - and hence he sends his ministers that they may become such.

(Benson Commentary, Tit. 1:1) *According to the faith of God's elect* — That is, God's true people; the propagation of which faith was the proper business of an apostle.

It was the spiritual reason of helping others to believe that prompted the apostle to forfeit his own freedom, teaching us that faith is so important that it is more than reasonable to both yield and sacrifice our own lives for its advancement. It was this *dispensation*, and/or stewardship of the gospel, purposed to bring others to faith that ultimately defined the apostle's reason for living.

The *dispensation of the grace* of God spoken of, of which Paul was commissioned to be a steward, had direct relationship to the grace of God provided to man, through God's Son. It is from *his fullness*, Jesus' own fullness, that Christians are blessed with both *grace and truth*. *And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* (John 1:16-17). There is no greater revelation offered to man than that which reveals that sinners need not be saved through themselves but through the grace of faith whereby through it, and not through any work of self, salvation can be gained.²⁴ Abraham is one of the great early biblical examples of an individual receiving God's righteousness, through possessing faith in his God.²⁵ *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness* (Rom. 4:3) Today this same righteousness is made available through faith in the Son of God.²⁶ Sincerely and genuinely believing upon the Son of God results in being made righteous before God. It is this *dispensation* of the gospel, which was entrusted to Paul, that he sought to make known to the world. It is also this same knowledge of the truth that we have been entrusted with today—to declare to sinners that if they truly desire to stand

23 Rom. 8:33 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

II Tim. 2:10 *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

24 Eph. 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

Phil. 3:9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

25 Gen. 15:6 *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

Rom. 4:9 *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

Rom. 4:22 *And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

Gal. 3:6 *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

Jas. 2:23 *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

26 Rom. 3:21-22 *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²²Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.*

righteous before the Lord, they need only to sincerely and genuinely believe upon the One sent to reveal Him.²⁷

Ephesians 3:3 *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 3:3) How that by revelation — see the notes at Galatians 1:12.²⁸ He refers to the revelation which was made to him when he was called to the apostolic office, that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, and that he was converted for the special purpose of carrying it to them; see Acts 9:15; Acts 22:21.²⁹

The Greek word for *mystery* is #3466 *mustérion*. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines the word as “1. a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding . . . 2. a hidden purpose or counsel; secret will . . . [3.] it denotes the mystic or hidden sense.” *Strong's Concordance* defines the word as “a mystery or secret doctrine.” In regard to its usage, *Strong's* states, “a mystery, secret, of which initiation is necessary; in the NT: the counsels of God, once hidden but now revealed in the Gospel or some fact thereof; the Christian revelation generally; particular truths or details of the Christian revelation.”

Practically, *mustérion* is used in connection with God revealing some new and previously hidden spiritual truth through divine inspiration. The word is used in the context of generally something beautiful being revealed that was previously un-

known. Some of the places where *mustérion* is seen in Scripture include the *mystery* of God, that hidden wisdom, purposed for our glory. *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory* (1 Cor. 2:7). Ephesians also previously spoke of the *mystery* of God's will, concerning that day when all things both in heaven and in earth will be gathered together in one under God's Son: *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him* (Eph. 1:9–10). Jesus also spoke of the *mystery* of the kingdom of God revealed to His disciples, but only vaguely made visible to the multitudes in parables: *And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables* (Mark 4:11). Colossians also speaks of that *mystery* concerning Christ in you, which is the great hope of believers being raised in glory with the Son of God: *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Col.

²⁷ Matt. 11:27 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

²⁸ John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

²⁹ John 17:25–26 *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. ²⁶ And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

²⁸ Gal. 1:12 *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

²⁹ Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

Acts 22:21 *And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

1:25-27). Last, 1 Timothy speaks of that *mystery of godliness* found in Jesus Christ when He was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, and received up into glory. This mystery regarding the person of Jesus, the Son of God, from Whom all true godliness originates, is perhaps the greatest mystery of all: *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory* (I Tim. 3:16). By these verses and others it is easy to see that the word *mustérion* is almost always used in connection with some beautiful spiritual truth being revealed, which was previously hidden to man, truth that only God's Holy Spirit can ultimately initiate and enlighten men to.

Ephesians 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

What was true of the Ephesians coming to know that apostle's knowledge of the mystery of Christ is also true of us, which is that God's Word must be *read*, studied, and meditated upon if we are ever to come to know the mysteries of God's secret plans for the saved. The mere reading of God's Word is also not a new concept, especially when we remember that only those who read, listen to, and obey God's Word will be blessed.³⁰ Jesus also rebuked many in His day for not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God, simply because they had either not read

or believed what was previously revealed concerning the resurrection of the dead.³¹ What this teaches us is that for a man to come to know the truth and the power of God made available through it, reading the Word of God is essential. For none can believe unless they hear,³² and there is no greater way to privately hear God than when we are willing to meditate and dwell on His holy Word. Jesus stated that the words He spoke were both Spirit and life,³³ and the same reality is true concerning the holy Scriptures we hold today. Because God's Word is God's life, then it can, when both read and believed upon, result in the life of God entering ourselves.

Ephesians 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

The means by which the mystery of God was made known, Paul reveals, is through the ministries of Christ's *holy apostles and prophets*. There has always been an argument that the Bible, the Word of God, was written by men. But what is unknown to the unsaved and unbelieving is that God's Word never has originated in the will of man. (II Pet. 1:21) *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Pet. 1:21) The word "prophecy" here is without the article, meaning prophecy in general — all that is prophetic in the Old Testament; or, in a more general sense still, all that the proph-

30 Rev. 1:3 *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

31 Matt. 22:29-32 *Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. ³⁰For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. ³¹But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, ³²I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

32 Rom. 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

33 John 6:63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

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ets taught, whether relating to future events or not.

By the will of man — It was not of human origin; not discovered by the human mind. The word “will,” here seems to be used in the sense of “prompting” or “suggestion;” men did not speak by their own suggestion, but as truth was brought to them by God.

But holy men of God — Pious men commissioned by God, or employed by him as his messengers to mankind.

Spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost - Compare 2 Timothy 3:16.³⁴ The Greek phrase here (ὕπὸ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου φερόμενος *hupo Pneumatos Hagiou pheromenos*) means “borne along, moved, influenced” by the Holy Ghost. The idea is, that in what they spake they were “carried along” by an influence from above. They moved in the case only as they were moved; they spake only as the influence of the Holy Ghost was upon them. They were no more self-moved than a vessel at sea is that is impelled by the wind; and as the progress made by the vessel is to be measured by the impulse bearing upon it, so the statements made by the prophets are to be traced to the impulse which bore upon their minds. They were not, indeed, in all respects like such a vessel, but only in regard to the fact that all they said as prophets was to be traced to the foreign influence that bore upon their minds.

Examples of God’s Spirit prompting His prophets to bring forth spiritual truth include the following:

I Samuel 10:6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

II Samuel 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

The means by which God revealed both His Word and His will in the Old Testament was His Spirit speaking through those divinely appointed messengers, appointed by Him. What was true in the Old Testament is equally true in the New Testament, whereby Jesus’ apostles and prophets have brought forth that which Christ revealed to them. Hence, both in the Old Testament and in the New, *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. This is the means by which the apostle received an understanding of the mystery of Christ. And this is also why saints can maintain great confidence, that the source of what is being revealed in the wonderful book of Ephesians is God, not man.

³⁴ *II Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

Endnotes

i

PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS				
YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS
34	Conversion, Damascus, Arabia	9	3 years - Arabia	
37	Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia			
46-47	Antioch, Jerusalem	11	1 year - Antioch	
48-49	First Missionary Journey and Antioch	13-14		Galatians
50	Jerusalem Council and Antioch	15		
51-53	Second Missionary Journey	16-18	18 months - Corinth	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
53-54	Antioch			
54-57	Third Missionary Journey	19-21	3 years - Ephesus	1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans
57	Jerusalem Arrest	22-23		
57-59	Caesarea Prisoner	24-26	2 years	
59-60	Journey to Rome	27-28		
60-67 circa	Rome House Arrest	28	5-7 years circa	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians 1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy

ConformingToJesus.com

“Paul’s Letters and Missionary Journeys Chart.” ConformingToJesus.Com, www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul's_letters-journeys_chart.htm. Accessed 12 Oct. 2024.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 10

Ephesians 3:6–11

Ephesians 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

THE Greek word for *joint-heirs* is #4789 *synkléronoma*. Strong's defines the word as "From *sun* and *kleronomos*; a co-heir, i.e. (by analogy) participant in common — fellow (joint)-heir, heir together, heir with." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines the word as "one who obtains something assigned to himself with others, a joint participant." Previously Ephesians revealed that prior to the gospel, all who were not by birth Israelites were without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world.¹ With the coming of Jesus Christ, the separation, alienation, and national estrangement from God have been removed. Now, not only do Gentiles have access to all God's promises in Christ, but they also through belief in the Savior can become through spiritual adoption the children of God. It is this spiritual sonship and being of the same body, and becoming a joint-heir with Jesus Christ,

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

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Rom. 8:16)
The Spirit of adoption doth not only excite us to call upon God as our Father, but it doth ascertain and assure us (as before) that we are his children.

The personal evidence of having become a joint-heir with Christ is being given a measure of the same Spirit as Christ.² It is this Spirit, this Holy Spirit, Who confirms spiritual adoption and assures saints of partaking in the eternal inheritance of the Son of God. By this it is confirmed, because Christ is in them,³ that they are purposed to share with Him.

(*Benson Commentary*, Rom. 8:17) *heirs of God* — Heirs of the heavenly inheritance, and by the redemption of their bodies, being made immortal like God, they shall enjoy

1 *Eph. 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

2 *Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

John 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:
3 *Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

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that inheritance. See note on 1 Peter 1:3.⁴ *And joint-heirs with Christ* — Entering into his joy, Matthew 25:21;⁵ sitting down on his throne, Revelation 3:21;⁶ partaking of his glory, John 17:22; Php 3:21; Colossians 3:4; 1 Corinthians 15:49;⁷ and *inheriting all things*, Revelation 21:7;⁸ jointly with him who is heir of all things, Hebrews 1:2.⁹ Only it must be observed, he is heir by nature, we by grace.

The climactic result of becoming a joint-heir with Christ is that we will be *glorified together* with Him, that just as Christians have suffered as the Saviour, so shall they at His appearance be made to share in His heavenly glory. Being glorified together with the Son of God is the apex of the glorious riches of the mystery. *The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Col. 1:27). It is Christ in a man Who gives him sure and realistic hope of

glory. It is this spiritual hope that is made available through regeneration that is referred to as the glorious riches of the mystery. Second Corinthians speaks of the process of being found in Christ, through Christ in us, and becoming a new creation of God, whereby all old things are passed away and all things have become new.¹⁰ It is this new birth,¹¹ this process of spiritual regeneration,¹² through being made a son of God,¹³ that is the Christian's hope of glory.¹⁴ By being made sons, believers are given the hope of sharing in the Lord's own glory. Ultimately Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end of the secret purpose of God to fully redeem those chosen for Himself,¹⁵ to share with Him in glory.

Ephesians 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

4 1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

5 Matt. 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

6 Rev. 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

7 John 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: Phil. 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

1 Cor. 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

8 Rev. 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

9 Heb. 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

10 11 Cor. 5:12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

11 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

12 Tit. 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Ezek. 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

13 John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

14 Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

15 Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

The apostle's ministry, he understood, could not be traced to any work, power, or personal worthiness of himself. Paul understood that his calling and appointment to be an apostle was by the grace of God and brought forth from the effectual working of God's power. It was the Lord's plan to ordain him to bear Christ's name to the unsaved,¹⁶ and the power of the Spirit given to him that enabled him to be effective in his spiritual calling and ministry. There were no grounds for personal glorification, simply because the ministry of becoming an apostle and being given the special powers associated with it were solely the work of God. Through grace he had been placed in ministry, and through God's power and grace he had been both ordained and spiritually equipped to carry out the ministry of an apostle.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Eph. 3:7) The statement is that he "became a minister, according to," in a way explained by, two things, a Divine Gift, and a Divine working Power.

Ephesians 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

The Greek word for *unsearchable* is #421 *anexichniastos*. *Strong's* defines the word as "past finding out; unsearchable. From *a* (as a negative particle) and a presumed derivative of a compound of *ek* and a derivative of *ichnos*; not tracked out, i.e. (by

implication) untraceable — past finding out; unsearchable."

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 3:8) The word rendered "unsearchable," ἀνεξιχνίαστον *anexichniaston*, occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament Romans 11:33,¹⁷ where it is rendered "past finding out;" see the notes at that verse. It means that which cannot be "traced out," or explored; which is inscrutable, or incomprehensible. The meaning here is, that there was a "sufficiency" in Christ which could not be traced out or explored. It was wholly incomprehensible. The fullness of the riches in him could not be appreciated. There is no more emphatic expression in the New Testament than this. It shows that the heart of the apostle was full of admiration of the sufficiency and glory that was in the Saviour; that he wanted words to express it; and that he considered it the highest honor to be permitted to tell the world that there were such riches in the Redeemer.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 3:8) *The unsearchable riches of Christ.*—The word "unsearchable" properly carries with it the metaphor (latent in our word "investigate") of tracking the footsteps, but not tracking them completely to their source or issue—thus gaining an evidence of a living power, but "not knowing whence it cometh or whither it goeth." In this proper sense it is used in Romans 11:33, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (as also in Job 5:9; Job 9:10¹⁸). Here it is used in a slightly different sense—applied to that "wealth" or fulness of Christ on which this Epistle lays such especial stress, as a wealth of truth which we can see in part

16 Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

Gal. 1:15–16 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

1 Tim. 2:7 *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

17 Rom. 11:33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

18 Job 5:9 *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:*

Job 9:10 *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.*

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but cannot wholly measure, and a wealth of grace which we can enjoy but cannot exhaust.

The riches found in Christ are such that they cannot be sufficiently measured or counted, nor can the heavenly grace that prompted them be fully understood. In fact just as the person and glory of the Savior are beyond natural comprehension, so equally are the riches, blessings, and graces God has purposed should flow through Him. This is also why true Christians should never fret when so many of the graces of the Savior, and what God has made Him to be for them, seem beyond full comprehension and understanding. They are unsearchable, past finding out, and ultimately incomprehensible. It can also be said that even when these riches have been revealed, still it is difficult for the mind and spirit of man to fully comprehend the glory purposed by God for His people. The intercessory ministry of the Lord Jesus is evidenced by the fact that even now He *liveth to make intercession* for those who come unto God by Him. Remarkably, Christ's intercession to save man did not end at the cross but continues until this day,¹⁹ testifying to the mercy and grace that are available for any in need of forgiveness of sin.

The apostle knew that none were less deserving to spread the good news of Jesus Christ than himself and that divine grace was the only reason he was in min-

istry. His previous life of persecuting the church,²⁰ through binding men and women in chains,²¹ shutting them up in prison, of whom many were put to death,²² reveals the great grace, mercy, and longsuffering of the Lord Jesus in saving Paul and purposing him for ministry. *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting* (I Tim. 1:16). In this verse is revealed one of the great and hidden reasons for Paul's conversion. It was so that his prior sinful life would reveal the great level of *mercy* available to all sinners. Amazingly Paul's salvation was purposed to be a pattern and example of the great and extensive longsuffering Jesus extends in the hope of saving even one soul.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Tim. 1:16) *That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering.*—If Christ could show mercy to him, surely in after times the greatest of sinners need never doubt the Redeemer's power and will to save. St. Paul's conversion foretold many a patient waiting on the part of the Lord, much long-suffering, which would never hurry to punish His enemies, but which would tarry long, in the hope of the sinner repenting while it was yet time. . . . If God would redeem Saul the persecutor, none need despair of finding mercy.

Just as Paul was the *chief of sinners*,²³ so was he purposed by the Lord to be an

19 Heb. 9:24 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

20 Gal. 1:13 *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:*

21 Acts 22:4–5 *And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. ⁵As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.*

22 Acts 26:10–11 *Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.*

¹¹ *And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.*

23 I Tim. 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

example of the *longsuffering* and *mercy* of the Lord. If the Lord could and would save such a deceived and vicious individual as this man, then here was clear evidence that through Christ's sacrifice for sin, forgiveness was available to all men. The two most vivid examples in Scripture that reveal the mercy and grace offered through the Son of God are made visible in the malefactor on the cross,²⁴ and Paul, who persecuted the cross.²⁵ In these two individuals we have one sinner who did absolutely nothing in his previous life worthy of salvation, and another religiously ignorant individual who engaged in great evil before his salvation. The grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ are great, and none bear witness to this fact more than those unworthy souls He has saved.²⁶ In these two spiritual examples the Lord demonstrates that He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him. *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them* (Heb. 7:25).

(*Barnes Notes on the Bible*, Heb. 7:25) *Wherefore he is able also* — As he ever lives, and ever intercedes, he has power to save. He does not begin the work of salvation, and then relinquish it by reason of death, but he lives on as long as it is necessary that anything should

be done for the salvation of his people. We need a Saviour who has power, and Christ has shown that he has all the power which is needful to rescue man from eternal death.

To the uttermost — This does not mean simply “forever” — but that he has power to save them so that their salvation shall be “complete” — εἰς τὸ παντελὲς *eis to panteles*. He does not abandon the work midway; he does not begin a work which he is unable to finish. He can aid us as long as we need anything done for our salvation; he can save all who will entrust their salvation to his hands.

That come unto God by him — In his name; or depending on him. To come to God, is to approach him for pardon and salvation.

Seeing he ever liveth — He does not die as the Jewish priests did.

To make intercession for them — see the note at Romans 8:34.²⁷ He constantly presents the merits of his death as a reason why we should be saved. The precise mode, however, in which he makes intercession in heaven for his people is not revealed. The general meaning is, that he undertakes their cause, and assists them in overcoming their foes and in their endeavors to live a holy life; compare 1 John 2:1.²⁸ He does in heaven whatever is necessary to obtain for us grace and strength; secures the aid which we need against our foes; and is the pledge or security for us that the law shall be honored, and the

24 Luke 23:43 *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

25 I Cor. 15:9 *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

26 Heb. 4:15–16 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Acts 15:10–11 *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.*

Tit. 2:11–14 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹²Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

¹³*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; ¹⁴Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

27 Rom. 8:34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

28 I John 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

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justice and truth of God maintained, though we are saved. It is reasonable to presume that this is somehow by the presentation of the merits of his great sacrifice, and that that is the ground on which all this grace is obtained. As that is infinite, we need not fear that it will ever be exhausted.

The Greek word for *able* is #1410 *dunamai*. *Strong's* defines the word as "to be able, to have power." *HELPS Word-Studies* defines the word as "to show ability (power); *able* (enabled by God), *empowered*." By these definitions it is seen that God has given Jesus all the necessary power, authority, and right to save the lost. So great is Christ's redemptive work that none are beyond His desire to save, and none are beyond His power and ability to save. The Greek word for *uttermost* is #3838 *pan-telés*. It is defined by *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* as "all-complete, perfect . . . (properly, unto completeness (Winers Grammar, § 51, 1 c.)) completely, perfectly, utterly." If there are any who desire salvation, they need only to look to Jesus Christ, Who has given Himself as an Intercessor so

that all repentant sinners may be saved through Him.

Ephesians 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

The Greek word for *fellowship* is #3622 *oikonomia*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as "properly, a stewardship, management (administration), i.e. where a person looks after another's affairs . . . [A "dispensation" can also refer to a special period of time (management). But this is a secondary (not primary) meaning of 3622 (*oikonomía*).]" The apostle states that he had been given a stewardship, a trust, to reveal to men the mystery of God in Christ, whereby through God's call in His Son men could be made holy and without blame before God. The *mystery*, which *from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God*, has also been referred to as that time between the sufferings and glory of Jesus. The Old Testament prophecies spoke of both the sufferings²⁹

29 Isa. 53:3-4 *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

Isa. 53:7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

Isa. 53:12 *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Psa. 22:1-18 *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

and the glory,³⁰ but neither the prophets who brought forth the prophesies nor any others truly knew what lay between these dramatic events. We now know this time to be that plan of redemption hidden in God. *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow* (I Pet. 1:10–11).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Pet. 1:10) *Have enquired and searched diligently.*—Rather, *did inquire*; for our present version tends to convey the notion that the prophetic writings which we now possess are the *result* of the inquiry. This would be wrong. Calvin rightly says: “When he states that the prophets inquired and examined, this refers not to their writings or teaching, but to the private longing with which each was fired.” In fact, St. Peter goes on to say that the writings which the Holy Spirit impelled them to make were actually the text on which their longings were the comment: they endeavoured to understand what they themselves had written. The two Greek words give a much more lively picture than the English, of the intense eagerness of the search, and of the depth to which it penetrated. If these

great prophets took such pains to understand our present salvation, we ought to take heed not to “let it slip.”

The reason Paul was made an apostle of Jesus Christ was so that all men might *see what is the fellowship* and/or dispensation of the mystery. This mystery was hidden in God from the beginning of the world and not revealed until Christ's glorification was complete.³¹ The latter part of the verse, *who created all things by Jesus Christ*, should actually be according to most ancient texts, *who created all things*.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 3:9) *Who created all things by Jesus Christ.*—The words “by Jesus Christ” should be omitted, probably having crept in from a gloss, and not belonging to the original. The description of God as “He who created all things,” material and spiritual, is here emphatic—designed to call attention to the dispensation of the gospel as existing in the primeval purpose of the Divine Mind (comp. Ephesians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 1:7³²), hidden from the beginning of the world (properly, from the ages) till the time of its revelation was come.

Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in

30 Dan. 7:13–14 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* Dan. 2:44 *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

Ps. 45:6–7 *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

Ps. 24:7–10 *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. 9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. 10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*

Ps. 68:18 *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.*

Ps. 110:1 *The Lord said unto my LORD, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

31 Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

32 I Cor. 1:7 *So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

According to God's purpose, it was never enough for the church to be made aware of the Lord's grand plan to save those purposed for heaven, but also that all principalities and powers in heavenly places might come to know through the church the manifold wisdom of God. In reality the Lord deemed it not enough for the mystery of God to be revealed to sinners but also that all other angelic and celestial beings might come to know in a similar manner even more fully the many-layered elements of the wisdom of God. The Greek word for *manifold* is #4182 *polupoi-kilos*. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines the word as "1. much-variegated; marked with a great variety of colors: of cloth or a painting . . . 2. much varied, manifold: σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ, manifesting itself in a great variety of forms." What is seen by this definition is that the Lord wished to convey, demonstrate, and openly reveal to all *principalities and powers in heavenly places* the great variety and/or forms of His wisdom. There are many things in creation that reveal the wisdom of God, such as the various and complex creatures on the earth, the formation of the heavens and stars, and the Lord's ability to take the wise in their own craftiness. Yet through the church there is an added element to God's wisdom. Ultimately the redemption of man and the formation of the church testify to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, another even more vivid example of the Lord's heavenly wisdom. That wisdom has brought sinners to glory and the Son of God to be the ruler of both heaven and earth, reestablishing God's sovereignty over both.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 3:10) *To the intent* — Greek, "that" *Iva Hina*. The sense

is, that it was with this design, or that this was the purpose for which all things were made. One grand purpose in the creation of the universe was, that the wisdom of God might be clearly shown by the church. It was not enough to evince it by the formation of the sun, the stars, the earth, the seas, the mountains, the floods. It was not enough to show it by the creation of intelligent beings, the formation of immortal minds on earth, and the various ranks of the angelic world. There were views of the divine character which could be obtained only in connection with the redemption of the world. Hence the universe was created, and man was made upon the earth, not merely to illustrate the divine perfections in the work of creation, but in a still more illustrious manner in the work of redemption. And hence the deep interest which the angelic hosts have ever evinced in the salvation of man.

Redemption is a complicated matter, which required the Lord to be just yet also provide a means whereby He could justify those unworthy of salvation through themselves. It was to solve this very intricate and complex problem that prompted God to send His only begotten Son into the world, to save those bound and held captive by sin. If any had known, whether they were evil spirits or sinful men, the process by which salvation would be accomplished, then the Scripture reveals that Jesus Christ would not have been crucified. *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory* (I Cor. 2:8). Collectively it was Satan and sinful men who orchestrated the death of the Son of God. This was evidenced when *Satan entered into Judas*³³ to lead him to betray Jesus and when the enraged multitude cried and shouted, *Crucify him, crucify him*.³⁴ Ultimately both evil angelic beings and corrupt and sinful men sought to prevent the kingdom of God

³³ Luke 22:3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

³⁴ Luke 23:21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

from being established.³⁵ But if Satan and sinners thought that Jesus was a threat to their evil plans, schemes, and influences in the world when He walked in the flesh, how much more is He a threat to their very existence once risen from the dead and given power and authority over all things.³⁶ In retrospect, the crucifixion of the Savior was the first step in God victoriously overcoming all evil. To kill the Savior was actually, the rise of righteousness and the beginning of the coming spiritual kingdom of God,³⁷ whereby Jesus will exert heavenly power and authority given to Him by God, to bring all things again under God's sovereignty and control. By killing the Savior, Whom God raised from the dead, those involved in Christ's crucifixion actually initiated the process of Jesus' glorification, through which at the name of Jesus every knee will be required to bow before Him.³⁸ Ultimately, God was in His Son reconciling the world unto Himself, and now through the Son He will be *all in all* throughout the entirety

of His creation. *And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all* (I Cor. 15:28).

(Benson Commentary, I Cor. 15:28) *God may be all in all*, will be this: That the Godhead may govern all things immediately by himself, without the intervention of a mediator between him and us, to exact our obedience in his name, and convey to us his favours and rewards, we being then to render all our duty immediately to him, and derive all our happiness immediately from him. So that, as now Christ, God-man, is *all in all*, Colossians 3:11,³⁹ because the Father hath put all things into his hands; does all things and governs all things by him; when this economy ceases, the Godhead alone will be *all in all*, as governing and influencing all things by himself immediately.³⁹

It is when time is complete that the mystery of God in Christ will be fully realized and enjoyed, when the eternal presence of God lives fully and completely in those

35 Mark 1:14–15 *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,* ¹⁵*And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

Luke 4:43 *And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.* Luke 11:2 *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

36 Matt. 28:18–19 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* ¹⁹*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

John 3:35 *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

Phil. 2:9–10 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

John 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

37 Dan. 7:27 *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

Dan. 7:14 *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

Zech. 14:9 *And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.* II Tim. 4:18 *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

38 Phil. 2:10 *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

39 Col. 3:11 *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

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whom Christ has saved, yea, throughout all of His new creation.⁴⁰

Ephesians 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Eph. 3:11) *according to the eternal purpose*] Lit., and better, *according to the purpose of the ages*. I.e. the Church, as watched by the angels, presents to them the final result (final in kind) of the great Plan of Divine developments by which the glory of God was to be displayed in His dealings with Sin. The redeemed Church corresponds to this Plan; it is (in kind, in essence,) the realization of the Divine Idea. No other and better thing in that kind is to succeed it. The past “ages,” angelic, paradisaic, patriarchal, Mosaic, prophetic, have led up to the Universal Church, in its spiritual reality, as their goal.

In Henry Scougal’s book *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* is found a remarkable and

spiritually enlightening thought. It reads, “The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its love.” The object of a Christian’s love is God, and it is this that reveals the excellency of his soul. But this love was actually imparted to the sinner through God’s eternal purpose in Christ.⁴¹ Hence, whereas the unsaved’s objects of love are the carnal and sinful things of this world, the object of saints’ love is the holy Creator of all things. It is this that makes those saved worthy of heaven, and this that was God’s hidden plan in His Son—to gain a people who would worship Him in Spirit and in truth, who would love Him with their whole hearts as He loves them, and who would willingly and without reservation yield to His total sovereignty. These are the created sons of God, and together with the Son of God, they complete God’s hidden plan of the ages.

40 II Pet. 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Isa. 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Isa. 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

Rom. 8:21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

41 Ezek. 11:19–20 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: ²⁰That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezek. 36:26–27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Jer. 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Heb. 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

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Chapter 11

Ephesians 3:12–19

Ephesians 3:12 *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*

I*n whom* is in reference to the previous verse¹ and God's *eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*. The Lord's great hidden and spiritual intention in sending His Son into the world was that those called through His Son could be granted free and unlimited access to Himself. It is this spiritual access whereby we can approach God with *boldness* and *confidence* that the ministry of the Son of God produced. It was this great result that the Father purposed in Christ and that has been absolutely fulfilled through Him. The *boldness and access with confidence* has specific reference to the throne of grace,² whereby after being found in Christ, anything asked according to divine will will be both heard and answered.³ It is an honor that previous sinners like ourselves not only have a means of approach to the Lord but also are provided a sense of spiritual assurance—that not only will we be accepted into God's presence but also His divine mercy and grace await us. This is what the Father eternally purposed in *Christ Jesus our Lord* and that which has been fully accomplished through Him. As a result, saints are giv-

en warranty that their prayers will be answered and their petitions granted. When understood, all believers can maintain strong spiritual confidence that the Lord will hear their prayers, grant the appeals that are desired, and boldly approach the Father knowing their rights as sons. Through the Lord Jesus Christ and His spiritual ministry—freedom, confidence, and boldness to enter into God's holy and divine presence, without spiritual shame or inferiority, are now the possession of all saints.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Eph. 3:12) *in whom we have*] Here (see last note) is the realization. It was "purposed in Him" that we His saints should be unspeakably near to the Father; and so we now *are*, and angels see it.

Ephesians 3:13 *Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

Because Paul knew that his tribulations could affect the faith of those he was writing to, he reminded them that his personal suffering was redounding to their future glory. Ultimately the tribulation that the apostle was enduring would have the effect of, and contribute to, the glorification of those who believed his mes-

1 Eph. 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

2 Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

3 I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

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sage. Paul deemed his own suffering far more than an adequate exchange if the final result would be the glorification of God's people. Because he held the Ephesians' faith and spiritual well-being as his primary concerns, the apostle considered his own suffering as of little importance. Just as the Savior could see the glory set before Him at the cross,⁴ so could Paul see that his suffering and imprisonment would redound toward the glory of those to whom he was sent to reveal Christ. Knowing that the revelation given to him by the Son of God⁵ was far greater than his own life, he was willing to wholeheartedly suffer for its spiritual advancement. The Lord Jesus had instructed him about the cost of discipleship,⁶ and the apostle's entire life of being persecuted proved this revelation to be true.⁷ Yet regardless of his trials, still he remained determined to finish his course with joy, testifying boldly to the grace provided through faith in the Lord Jesus. *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God* (Acts 20:24).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Acts 20:24) *But none of these things move me* ...—Literally, *But I take account of nothing, nor do I hold my life* ... We note the parallelism with Luther's famous declaration, when warned by his friends not to go to Worms, "I

will go thither, though there should be devils on every house-top."

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 20:24) *Neither count I my life* — I do not consider my life as so valuable as to be retained by turning away from bonds and persecutions. I am certain of bonds and afflictions; I am willing also, if it be necessary, to lay down my life in the prosecution of the same purpose.

Dear unto myself— So precious or valuable as to be retained at the sacrifice of duty. I am willing to sacrifice it if it be necessary. This was the spirit of the Saviour, and of all the early Christians. Duty is of more importance than life; and when either duty or life is to be sacrificed, life is to be cheerfully surrendered.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

What is revealed here is the beginning of Paul's second prayer for the Ephesians. The *cause* is that *cause* that is directly related to the previous verse, the *glory* that awaits those who have believed upon the Lord Jesus.⁸ Grace has always preceded glory in Scripture, and the grace that is given to believers through Jesus Christ⁹ understandably is that which lays the foundation for their glorification. Whenever God's grace has been provided to an individual or a nation,¹⁰ you can be cer-

4 Heb. 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

5 Gal. 1:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

6 Acts 9:16 For I will shew him [Paul] how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

7 II Cor. 11:24–28 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. ²⁵Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

8 Eph. 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

9 John 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

10 Isa. 60:19–21 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. ²⁰Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the

tain that heavenly glory is purposed to follow. In God's eyes, those whom He has called He has justified, and His guarantee and promise to them is that they will be glorified with His Son. *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified* (Rom. 8:30). Because the Lord sees the end from the beginning¹¹ and foretells the course of future events, long before their actual complete realization, He speaks of the future as if it were the past. It is also worth noting that the glorification of those saved through Christianity is its final end—so that in the fullness

of time, all who have believed upon the Son of God, will have as their heavenly reward the sharing, partaking, and glory bestowed upon them, resembling the Lord's own celestial glory.¹² At the point of the Son of man's return, believers will miraculously be transformed to resemble their Savior.¹³ It is at this moment, when those chosen by God through His Son will be fully revealed to the world, that the world will be brought to unquestionably comprehend, (most coming to this spiritual understanding through fear and dread¹⁴) that the Lord is God, and those to whom He has given His Spirit are now recognized as His newly birthed heavenly

days of thy mourning shall be ended. ²¹Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Ezek. 37:12-14 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

¹³And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, ¹⁴And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

Mic. 2:12-13 I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. ¹³The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.

Ezek. 37:22-28 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. ²³Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. ²⁴And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. ²⁵And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. ²⁶Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. ²⁷My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ²⁸And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

11 Isa. 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

12 Matt 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

13 I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

14 Isa. 2:10-12 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. ¹¹The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. ¹²For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

Rev. 6:15-17 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: ¹⁷For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

sons. This will be openly manifested and declared when those saved by the Son are transformed to resemble Him in both glory and body. This is the Christian's hope, though very few of even the most faithful followers of the Lord Jesus truly believe it. Regardless, the facts remain, that being glorified with Him will be the final end of those chosen through the Son of God. Ultimately Christ's glory will be shared with and conferred upon His most loyal, faithful, and trustworthy followers. The promise of God has always been that He will provide grace and glory to those who walk uprightly before Him. To believe on the Son of God is just this. This final spiritual realization will be revealed when those who have been given grace through the Lord Jesus are then spiritually glorified both with and through Him. *For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly* (Ps. 84:11).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 84:11) *The Lord will give grace and glory* — Grace, or favor, here; glory, or honor, in the world to come. He will bestow all needful favor on his people in this life; he will admit them to glory in the world to come. Grace and glory are connected. The bestowment of the one will be followed by the other. Romans 8:29–30.¹⁵ He that partakes of the grace of God on earth will partake of glory in heaven. Grace comes before glory; glory always follows where grace is given.

It is the glory that awaits all Christians¹⁶ that prompted the apostle to bow his knees to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this proletarian, plebeian, and humble approach that the apostle takes before addressing the heavenly Father, for Whom all glory, praise, and worship is rightly due. The apostle knew the great spiritual importance of kneeling in the Lord's presence, and to do anything less was unworthy of the mercy and grace provided by Him. It is also proper that we kneel before the Father before making even the smallest request of Him. Knowing that to get just one prayer answered is grace upon grace, but to get any prayer answered, especially when beseeching the Lord for others, is even more grace than this. It was this confidence that Paul possessed in approaching the Father, knowing that prayers offered on behalf of the Ephesians would be answered. To believe the Lord will answer our own prayers is a sign of great faith; to believe that He will answer us in the cause of others is even greater faith than this.

Ephesians 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The *whole family* referenced here contains not only those redeemed but also the entirety of God's heavenly family. This includes sharing union with an innumerable company of angels,¹⁷ the spirits of just men made perfect,¹⁸ and very likely a host of many other heavenly beings present-

15 Rom. 8:29–30 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

16 II Pet. 1:3 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Rom. 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

17 Heb. 12:22 *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,*

18 Heb. 12:23 *To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

ly unknown to us. Every Christian produced through heavenly adoption¹⁹ and certified through spiritual regeneration²⁰ is by right a member of God's heavenly family. Just as earthly children carry the name of their fathers and are through physical birth reckoned as the children of those who have brought them into the world, so also is every born-again²¹ man or woman by heavenly right properly regarded as a member of God's family. Because of their spiritual birth, believers have been given the spiritual right to be identified with God as their Father.²² To be saved by the Lord is to be granted to share in a very intimate and paternal relationship with Him. Because He has made those called through His Son to be His own, they can proudly claim Him as their own. There is no greater honor on earth than to be given the power to become a son of God through Him to Whom God gave the ultimate and final authority to give others the power and heavenly right of spiritual sonship. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name* (John 1:12).

(Geneva Study Bible, John 1:12) The Son being shut out by the majority of his people, and acknowledged but by a few, regenerates those few by his own strength and power, and receives them into that honour which is common to all the children of God, that is, to be the sons of God.

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

In beginning his prayer, the apostle's spiritual request is that the saints residing at Ephesus and all those found to be faithful in Christ Jesus²³ might be *strengthened with might by his [God's] Spirit in the inner man*. The means by which the believer is both invigorated and strengthened with might is through the Christ Spirit in his heart.²⁴ Through this divine nature, God imparts the necessary strength and spiritual resolve to carry out the Christian calling and endure the worldly difficulties associated with it. Paul knew by personal experience the great power of the Spirit to strengthen, invigorate, and bolster the inner man. What he thus prayed for was that

19 Eph. 1:5 *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Rom. 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

John 20:17 *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

20 Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

21 John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 1:13 *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

I John 5:1 *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

I John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

I John 3:9 *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

22 I Cor. 8:6 *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

23 Eph. 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

24 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

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which God had effected in his own life²⁵ to be accomplished in the Ephesians as well. The power of the Spirit in the heart of the Christian is a supernatural source of comfort,²⁶ strength, and spiritual encouragement. For those who have believed upon the Son of God and been given a portion of His Spirit, His strong presence will do for the soul and heart that which nothing else in this world can do. This is why those who possess the Holy Spirit literally have the power of God living within them.²⁷ To be filled with God's Spirit is to be filled with Christ's power and life,

which results in our own earthly lives being strengthened through Him. There is no greater force in the Christian's life than the Holy Spirit living within him—since it is from this divine and holy nature that heavenly power enters his life²⁸ and spiritual wisdom is transmitted into the depths of his soul.²⁹

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 3:16) To be strengthened with might — To be powerfully strengthened. That is, to give you abundant strength to bear trials; to perform your duties; to glorify his name.

25 *II Cor. 11:25–28 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

26 *John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

27 *Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

28 *Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Judg. 3:9–10 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the Lord delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.

Judg. 14:5–6 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. ⁶And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

Judg. 15:14–15 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. ¹⁵And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

29 *Exod. 31:3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Isa. 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

I Cor. 12:8 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

John 14:26 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

I Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

I John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

In the inner man — In the heart, the mind, the soul; see the notes on Romans 7:22.³⁰ The “body” needs to be strengthened every day. In like manner the soul needs constant supplies of grace. Piety needs to be constantly invigorated, or it withers and decays. Every Christian needs grace given each day to enable him to bear trials, to resist temptation, to discharge his duty, to live a life of faith.

The *inner man* is that part of the heart of the believer that is separate from his natural flesh.³¹ This hidden and invisible spiritual life in the saved remains unable to be detected by the human eye. It is also where the spiritual conscience is formed and the Holy Spirit is free to move in convicting the believer’s heart of sin.³² It is here where believers delight in the law of God,³³ though their fleshly body remains bound by sin.³⁴ It is here where God’s Spirit dwells, Who produces the desire and determination to comply with divine will. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will*

take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (Ezek. 36:26–27). It is because of this spiritual transformation within the sinner’s heart that old habits of the flesh can be put off³⁵ and new, holy, and pure thoughts to pursue the Lord’s righteousness can be put on.³⁶ This inner and/or inward man is also that part of the saved created in Christ Jesus that has been purposed by God to prompt the believer to love³⁷ and do good in His name.³⁸ This holy nature is also the practical fulfillment of the prophecy given to Ezekiel when he prophesied of the Lord creating new hearts, which would effectuate them to cease resisting divine will and abandon hardening themselves against heavenly sovereignty.³⁹ The result of the Lord giving the penitent a portion of His own holy, spiritual nature enables him to walk in God’s statutes and keep

30 Rom. 7:22 *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*

31 II Cor. 4:16 *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

32 John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men.*

33 Rom. 7:22 *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*

34 Rom. 7:23 *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

35 Eph. 4:22 *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

36 Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

37 Rom. 5:5 *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

38 Eph. 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

39 Ezek. 14:4 *Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; Dan. 5:20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:*

Heb. 4:7 *Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Mark 6:52 *For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*

Matt. 19:7 *They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?*

Mark 16:14 *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

God's judgments.⁴⁰ Ultimately through divine intervention and the ministry of the Son of God, a new race of holy, devout, and peculiar people have been created.⁴¹ Jesus referred to this momentous event—when God spiritually and miraculously transforms the hearts of the unrighteous and unholy—as being born from above.⁴² It is also through receiving God's holy nature into their hearts that sinners are transformed into saints.

Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

It is here we observe the great, grand, and ultimate purpose of the Spirit strengthening with might the inner man. It is so that Christ may *dwell in the heart* and love may deepen itself in the believer's soul.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 3:17) The indwelling of Christ (as here the construction of the original plainly shows) is not a consequence of the gift of the Spirit; it is identical with it, for the office of the Holy Spirit is to implant and work out in us the likeness of Christ. So in John 14:16-20,⁴³ in immediate connection with the promise of the Comforter, we read: "I will not leave you orphaned; I will come to you."⁴⁴ Ye shall know that ... ye are in me

and I in you." Hence the life in the Spirit is described as "To me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21);⁴⁴ "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20).⁴⁵ Faith is simply the condition of that indwelling of Christ (comp. Ephesians 2:8),⁴⁶ the opening of the door to Him that He may enter in.

A person's belief upon the Son of God and exercise of faith in Him allows Christ to enter his heart.⁴⁷ It is this faith in Himself that the Lord Jesus patiently waits for in order that His eternal presence in those now dead in sin⁴⁸ can save them. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me* (Rev. 3:20).

(*Benson Commentary*, Rev. 3:20) *Behold, I stand* — Or, *I have stood*, as εστηκα literally signifies, namely, for a long time and I still stand, even at this instant; *at the door* — Of men's hearts; *and knock* — Waiting for admittance: *if any man hear my voice* — With a due regard, namely, the voice of my providence, word, and Spirit; *and open the door* — Willingly receive me, or welcome me with the affection due to such a friend and Saviour; *I will come in to him* — And *dwell in his heart by faith*, (Ephesians 3:17,) how mean soever his circumstances in life may be, and how faulty soever his character

40 Ezek. 36:25-27 *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*²⁶ *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*²⁷ *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

41 1 Pet. 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*

42 John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

43 John 14:16-20 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*¹⁷ *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*¹⁸ *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*¹⁹ *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*²⁰ *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

44 Phil. 1:21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

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

46 Eph. 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

47 Rev. 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

48 Eph. 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

may have been formerly; *and will sup with him* — Refreshing him with the gifts and graces of my Spirit, and delighting myself in what I have given; *and he with me* — As I will sup with him here, he shall sup with me in life everlasting hereafter.

It is the Lord Jesus, in His present heavenly position, Who humbly knocks and waits patiently at the doors of men's hearts. His eternal hope is that they might repent, and turn to Him. The *I* is emphatic: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock*. To serve as a servant because you were born one is vastly different than serving as a servant when you are not one and have actually been given preeminence above all mankind.⁴⁹ Yet it is this disposition of being lowly and humble, manifested by pursuing the salvation of those lower than Himself, that reveals Christ's unique, heavenly, holy, and divine nature. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls* (Matt. 11:29).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Matt. 11:29) *I am meek and lowly in heart*] The character of Jesus described by Himself; cp. 2 Corinthians 10:1, "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."⁵⁰ It is this character that brings rest to the soul, and therefore

gives us a reason why men should become His disciples.

In the Son of man we have the complete contrast to fallen man. Whereas Christ is lowly and meek, sinners are prideful and haughty. Whereas Christ is solely interested in the needs and concerns of others, sinners selfishly remain nothing more than lovers of themselves, as well as lovers of pleasures more than God.⁵¹ From this undeniable contrast it is easy to see how vastly different is a holy, humble, and caring Savior from the selfish, stubborn, and resistant sinners He both humbly and patiently desires to save.

Being rooted and grounded in love. To truly develop in Christ and certify that Christ lives within you, God's love must not only be possessed but actually be grown, like a tree's roots deepening and expanding themselves in the soil from which it has sprung. It is only as God's love begins, develops, and expands itself in the Christian's heart that true Christian growth can occur. Love is the grand subject of Jesus' first two commandments,⁵² and His presence in the heart will result in prompting His followers to pursue His love as their greatest reason and object for living. Ultimately when Christ truly enters a man

49 Phil. 2:9-10 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Rev. 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

I Tim. 6:13-15 *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebekable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*

50 II Cor. 10:1 *Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:*

51 II Tim. 3:2-4 *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 52 Matt. 22:37-40 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38This is the first and great commandment. 39And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

and begins to live within his heart, God's love will very soon abundantly flow from his life.⁵³ It is also the spiritual fruit⁵⁴ of God's love that unquestionably proves that Christ lives within His people. Where love is, sin will not be; where sin is, love cannot be. Thus, he who grows in love has no desire to sin, and he who sins has no true and genuine desire or inclination to be ruled by love. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another* (John 13:35). It is by love, and only through love, that Christ's true disciples can be known. There is no other accurate barometer than this, which proves true religious piety, nor any other power or spiritual ability that properly identifies being born of God. All other powers and actions may be imitated and very covertly copied,⁵⁵ but true love in the heart never can be. In a world where counterfeit, hypocritical, and fake love is commonplace, only sincere and genuine love for God and the children of God reveals true salvation.⁵⁶ Hence, even if a man possesses an abundance of other gifts and presumed-to-be spiritual abilities, if love does not rule his life, then he is not of God, nor does God count him as His own.⁵⁷ Because love is the centerpiece of God's holy nature, then those who are truly the sons of God will without question manifest Christ's divine love both in their hearts and in their lives. *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* (I John 4:16).

53 I Thess. 4:9 *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*

54 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

55 II Thess. 2:9 *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

56 I John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

57 I Cor. 13:1–2 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

Ephesians 3:18 *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

Here we have the *breadth, and length, and depth, and height* of Christ's love, compared to the construction of a mighty building, or perhaps, as some have inferred, a more accurate comparison—the expansiveness of the universe itself.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Eph. 3:18) The imagery is perhaps suggested by a vastly spacious building, with its high towers and deep foundations. But may it not rather be suggested by the visible Universe itself, as if a spectator gazed from horizon to horizon, and at the boundless air above, and thought of the depths beneath his feet?

Ephesians 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

In the apostle's description of Christ's love, we observe that it is beyond both natural and human comprehension. In fact so much so that the Scriptures state that it *passeth understanding*.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 3:19) *Which passeth knowledge* — There "seems" to be a slight contradiction here in expressing a wish to know what cannot be known, or in a desire that they should understand that which cannot be understood. But it is the language of a man whose heart was full to overflowing. He had a deep sense of the love of Christ, and he expressed a wish that they

should understand it. Suddenly he has such an apprehension of it, that he says it is indeed infinite. No one can attain to a full view of it. It had no limit. It was unlike anything which had ever been evinced before.

The depth, length, breadth, and height of Christ's love is practically unfathomable to the human mind. It is as unestimable to be fully grasped or understood as Christ Himself. And it is for this very spiritual reason that the apostle prays to God, that His Spirit may enlighten and spiritually illuminate the Ephesians to the grand and great extent of God's and Christ's love for them, so that they may come to know the *love of Christ* and as a result be *filled with all the fulness of God*. It is only when believers come to know, are filled with, and walk in God's love that the godhead is evidenced to fully dwell within them. It is this possessing the *fulness of the Godhead bodily* that characterizes their Savior,⁵⁸ and the apostle's prayer is that a similar fullness of God may also be experienced and evidenced in those who come to believe upon His name.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 3:19) In the human nature of Christ ... "In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" in the soul of the believer there may be a progressive movement towards this fullness. No higher view can be conceived of the dignity of man's nature, and the glorious privileges conferred on him by the gospel, than that he is susceptible of such conformity to God.

Who can conceive that man should have attained to such a capacity by a mere process of evolution? "So God made man in his own image,"⁵⁹ and in Christ man is "renewed in righteousness and holiness after the image of him who created him."⁶⁰

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Now unto him. What we initially observe in this verse is that the emphasis is on the Lord and on what He is able to do above and beyond whatever men might foolishly presume He cannot do. Ultimately the Lord's ability to do is greater and surpasses what any human thinking and/or natural reason believes is available. The placement of the verse in the epistle is critical in that it includes all the great spiritual revelations that have preceded it. This encompasses all that God has spoken concerning the believer's being chosen in Christ,⁶¹ his adoption as a son,⁶² as well as the believer's promised spiritual inheritance.⁶³ The degree to that which the Lord is able to do is both expressed and emphasized here: it is *exceeding abundantly above*.

The Greek word for *above* is *huper* #5228. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word "for, on behalf of, above, beyond, more than." *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word

58 Col. 2:9 *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

59 Gen. 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

60 Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

61 Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

62 Eph. 1:5 *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

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

Col. 3:24 *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

“properly, beyond (above); (figuratively) to extend benefit (help) that reaches beyond the present situation.” By these definitions the Lord reveals that regardless of our present condition on the earth and/or future place in heaven, and whatever we might ask or think we need of God—He is able to do *above* and *beyond*, and *exceeding abundantly more than*, anything we could either pray for or think of. Ultimately God’s spiritual ability to do is out of the range of what any unbelieving and/or even believing man believes He can. Understandably, the natural laws that limit God’s creatures do not limit their Creator. This is why human thought and/or reason should never restrict or limit what the Lord both can and will do for the saved, especially when prayers of faith are directed toward Him. And although God’s ability to do whatever is necessary for both the believer’s blessing and survival is not limited to the believer’s direct prayer life, prayers will open the door for the Lord to accomplish many things thought humanly impossible. “In thinking of God it is as if we thought of space—however far our conceptions may travel, there is still infinity beyond. Paul had asked much in this prayer, and thoughts can always travel beyond words, yet the excess of God’s power beyond both was infinite.”⁶⁴

Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. The revelation given that God is able to do *exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think* is practically proven at this point in the study of Ephesians. This

is because being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world,⁶⁵ being adopted as sons through the Son of God,⁶⁶ being given an acceptance⁶⁷ and granted redemption through His blood,⁶⁸ culminating with being gathered together unto Him⁶⁹ and provided a heavenly inheritance through Him—is far above and beyond and outside any reasonable thought of even the most spiritual man. Since God has already revealed what He has done, which exceeds even the most imaginative human mind, is there anything beyond His power to do whatever is needed of Him and especially so in regard to what He has promised for all those chosen in Christ in the future? What a man thinks is far deeper and extends farther than even his most verbal prayers. Ultimately God is able to do immeasurably, bountifully, and endlessly above what any human utterance or thought believes He can do. The separation between the reality of God’s power and what man can perceive of it is beyond even the most remote notion and musing of the human consciousness. Understandably God’s ability to do cannot be grasped by the small and organic electrical sensor that is the human mind.

(Benson Commentary, Eph. 3:20–21) Now unto him, &c.—This doxology is admirably adapted to strengthen our faith, that we may not stagger at the great things the apostle has been praying for, as if they were too much for God to give, or for us to expect to receive from him.

Another revelation that speaks of the spiritual ability of God to go beyond what

64 *Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 3:20

65 *Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

66 *Eph. 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

67 *Eph. 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

68 *Eph. 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

69 *Eph. 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

men perceive as spiritually possible is I Corinthians 2:9—*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

Even with all the great revelation previously presented to us in Ephesians, still God has prepared even more than this for *them that love Him*. Not only then is God's ability to do above man's understanding, but also *the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him* have not even entered the heart of man. This is why not until revelation is given from heaven, similar to that revealed in Ephesians, can even a glimpse of the believer's future hopes and blessings in Christ be realized.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 2:9) Eye hath not seen—This is the same as saying, that no one had ever fully perceived and understood the value and beauty of those things which God has prepared for his people. All the world had been strangers to this until God made a revelation to his people by his Spirit. The blessedness which the apostle referred to had been unknown alike to the Jews and the Gentiles.

Nor ear heard—We learn the existence and quality of objects by the external senses; and those senses are used to denote any acquisition of knowledge. To say that the eye had not seen, nor the ear heard, was, therefore, the same as saying that it was not known at all. All people had been ignorant of it.

Neither have entered into the heart of man—No man has conceived it; or understood it. It is new; and is above all that man has seen, and felt, and known.

According to the power that worketh in us. Because of the Holy Spirit and His resi-

dent spiritual power abiding within the redeemed, what God has said He *can* do He *will* do through the instrument of His own divine nature. Since the Lord's supernatural ability is not limited to any mortal man's narrow view of what he believes the Lord can do, then human reason should never be elevated above divine revelation. This is also why to relegate God to human presumption is to practically destroy any realistic possibility of growing in any real belief in Him. To think that God is restricted by natural thought, and/or human reason is as silly as if we were to limit human power and ability to that which is considered one of the most foolish creatures on the earth, the North African or red-necked ostrich—a dull-witted creature that buries its head in the sand in times of crisis, presuming that if it cannot see predators, then predators cannot see it. Because also man exceeds in abundance this natural creature in all intellectual power and ability, why cannot God be as contrastingly superior in wisdom, power, and intellect above man? Hence, if there are clearly degrees of power and intellect of creatures that abide on the earth, then is it unreasonable to conclude that there cannot exist a similar separation between those on the earth and Him Who resides in heaven? If one reality is clearly and undeniably proved to be accurate, why, it should be asked, cannot the other also be? This is also why the apostle prays for the Ephesians, that the Lord might by divine illumination and spiritual enlightenment open their understanding in order that they graciously come to believe (as did the father of all those who believe, Abraham)⁷⁰ that all that God has promised He is more than willing and able to perform. *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform* (Rom. 4:21). In respect to Abra-

⁷⁰ Rom. 4:11 *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:*

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ham, Matthew Poole writes, “He looked upon God as one that was perfectly able to do whatever he had promised, and as one that was most faithful, and sure never to fail in the performance.”⁷¹

Other translations of Ephesians 3:20 provide even more confirmation of God’s exceedingly great spiritual power:

(NIV) *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,*

(NLT) *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*

(ISV) *Now to the one who can do infinitely more than all we can ask or imagine according to the power that is working among us—*

(AMP) *Now to Him who is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us,*

Ephesians 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Eph. 3:21) *In the church—Or, by the church; Ephesians 3:10.⁷² The church was to be the instrument by which the glory of God would be shown;*

and it was by the church that his praise would be celebrated.

It is *in Christ Jesus* and through His *church* that the celestial *glory* of God has been purposed to be made even more visible. So significant is the church and her redemption that God has purposed His own heavenly glory to be revealed through her. Just as the heavens declare the glory of God,⁷³ so is that spiritual and holy assembly formed through God’s Son likewise purposed to be an instrument to bring even greater awareness to God’s celestial glory—so that in the end, all of God’s created beings will collectively, and with one unified harmonious voice, testify that *unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end*. It is also not simply that the Lord has saved a remnant of the race of man but that through those whom He has saved, His own glory, goodness, and forgiving nature are to be revealed. This act of heavenly kindness, generosity, and wisdom, the Scriptures reveal, will remain eternally visible *throughout all ages, world without end*.

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Eph. 3:21) *in the church by Christ Jesus*] Lit., *in Christ Jesus*. “The glory” is ascribed “in Him” as the Father is manifested in Him, and “in Him reconciled the world to Himself.”—But very strong evidence favours the reading *in the Church and in Christ Jesus*. If this is adopted, and it is nearly certain, the meaning is that the reasons of eternal praise to the Father lie both in the Church and in the Saviour; in the Church, as chosen and glorified by Him, in the Saviour as His supreme and all-including Gift.

⁷¹ Matthew Poole’s Commentary, Rom. 4:21

⁷² Eph. 3:10 *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*

⁷³ Ps. 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

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Chapter 12

Ephesians 4:1–3

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

Chapter 4 of Ephesians begins the practical part of the letter. Chapters 1–3 form the doctrinal portion, revealing the believer's standing in Christ; chapters 4–6 then shift to how believers are to *walk worthy* of their call to Christ. The reason the apostle Paul is beseeching the Ephesians to walk worthy of their heavenly call is that it is now their religious duty to do so. The more enlightened the Christian becomes to the hope of heaven,¹ the more eagerly he should strive to enter into it.² This is why there is no such thing as truly being saved by the Son of God if a person refuses to take up his cross to properly follow Him. This is what Jesus instructed His faithful followers to do, and if any do not, then they are practically denying the very One sent to save them. To refuse or neglect to take up one's cross, which every saved man is responsible to bear, is to put in jeopardy relationship with the very One Who died upon it. *Then said Jesus*

unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it (Matt. 16:24–25).

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Matt. 16:25) A true disciple of Christ is one that does follow him in duty, and shall follow him to glory. He is one that walks in the same way Christ walked in, is led by his Spirit, and treads in his steps, whithersoever he goes. Let him deny himself. If self-denial be a hard lesson, it is no more than what our Master learned and practised, to redeem us, and to teach us. Let him take up his cross. The cross is here put for every trouble that befalls us. . . . If any man will have the name and credit of a disciple, let him follow Christ in the work and duty of a disciple. If all worldly things are worthless when compared with the life of the body, how forcible the same argument with respect to the soul and its state of never-ending happiness or misery! Thousands lose their souls for the most trifling gain, or the most worthless indulgence, nay, often from mere sloth and negligence. Whatever is the object for which men forsake Christ, that is the price at which Satan buys their souls.

1 Eph. 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: II Cor. 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

2 Phil. 3:13-14 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Luke 13:24 *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Heb. 4:11 *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Matt. 16:24) *Let him deny himself, and take up his cross.*—Our common thoughts of “self-denial,” *i.e.*, the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. If he does not so deny himself, he is in danger, as Peter was (it is significant that the same word is used in both instances), of denying his Lord. The self-denial here commanded has, accordingly, its highest type and pattern in the act by which the Son of God, in becoming man, “emptied Himself” (see Note on Philippians 2:7³) of all that constituted, if we may so speak, the “self” of His divine nature. The words “take up his cross,” which the disciples had heard before (see Note on Matthew 10:38⁴), were now clothed with a new and more distinct meaning, by the words that spoke so clearly of the death of which the cross was to be the instrument.

It is important to note, as we begin our expositional study of the practical part of Ephesians, that it is impossible to truly walk in fellowship with God if there is not unity with and love for our fellow Christians.⁵ Jesus said that on two commandments,⁶ and not just one, hang all the law and the prophets—instructing us that it is not enough to hold an affection for God if we negate Christ’s second commandment to love our neighbor as

ourselves. Ultimately for the Word of God to be kept, complete love for God and the people of God must be possessed—so that if either of Jesus’ two commandments is not kept or adhered to, then true unity with the Father will be broken. Thus, if any of us break Jesus’ first commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, which undoubtedly would be sin, then it is foolish to presume that to break Christ’s second commandment, by not loving our neighbor as ourselves, will not be viewed by the Lord just as equally as sin.

Ephesians 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

After beseeching the Ephesians to walk worthy of their high spiritual calling,⁷ the apostle begins laying the foundation of how this is to be practically realized. It begins with the believer walking in *lowliness* and *meekness* of heart. The Greek word for *lowliness* is #5012 *tapeinophrosune*. *Strong's Lexicon* reveals its meaning as “having a humble opinion of oneself, a deep sense of one’s moral littleness, and a modest view of one’s importance.” The word is used in direct contrast to human pride. It is the opposite of internal exaltation and the lifting up of oneself, as exhibited in Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9–14.⁸ To

³ Phil. 2:7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁴ Matt. 10:38 *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

⁵ I John 4:20 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

⁶ Matt. 22:37–40 *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

⁷ Phil. 3:13–14 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

⁸ Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹Luke 18:9–14 *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all**

possess a humble spirit is to see ourselves as we truly are, sinners saved by unmerited grace and granted salvation as a gift from God.⁹ This same spiritual behavior is revealed in Romans 12:3—*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* There is no greater sin that will bar men from heaven and prohibit the possibility of gaining any true knowledge

of God than the overestimation of one's own personal importance and ability. It is correct to believe what we have been made to be in Christ; it is incorrect to allow human pride to esteem ourselves greater and more spiritually important than we really are.¹⁰ Thus, to come to perceive what true spiritual lowliness is, it is necessary to understand its contrasting counterpart, pride.¹¹ The Bible contains an abundance of scripture revealing how opposed the Lord is to those both ruled and governed by pride¹²—so much so that the world has

*that I possess.*¹³ *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*¹⁴ *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

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

Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Rom. 5:15 *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.* John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

Rom. 5:10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

10 Gal. 6:3 *For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

11 Ps. 10:4 *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

Job 33:17 *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

Job 35:12 *There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.*

Job 41:34 *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.*

Prov. 21:4 *An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.*

Mark 7:20-23 *And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.*²¹ *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*²² *Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:*²³ *All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

Obad. 1:3 *The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?*

Ps. 101:5 *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.*

Ps. 73:6 *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*

Dan. 5:20 *But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:*

I Tim. 3:6 *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

12 Prov. 29:23 *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

Prov. 16:5 *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*

Dan. 4:37 *Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.*

Dan. 5:20 *But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:*

Ps. 138:6 *Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*

Isa. 23:9 *The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.*

Lev. 26:19 *And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:*

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been provided the revelation that there exists in the future an actual day and time for all who are proud and lofty in heart to be brought low. *For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low* (Isa. 2:12). It is not simply that sinners and those who are wise of heart will not enter heaven but that heaven's wrath will one day be poured out upon them. Ultimately it is pride that keeps men from seeking the Lord,¹³ and it is the very essence of what God deems as sin.¹⁴ C. S. Lewis once said, "According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."¹⁵ Scripture also states that the *pride of life*, does not originate from God¹⁶ but has its genesis in the devil¹⁷ and fallen man.¹⁸ Understandably it is only the Spirit of

God Who can truly reveal to men their genetically inherited conceit, and only the same Spirit of the Lord Who is able to transform them out of it. No man's soul is a vacuum, and something must fill it. If it is not lowliness of mind,¹⁹ which is a product of the Spirit of God, then it will be the act of being proud of heart, which has direct connection to the devil²⁰ and fallen man. Jesus also declared in respect to pursuing lowliness and meekness that it is something that must be learned from Him. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls* (Matt. 11:29).

(Benson Commentary, Matt. 11:29) *And learn of me*—Μαθετε απ' εμου, *Be my disciples; be taught by me*, namely, all things pertaining to your acceptance with God, your duty, and your happiness: *for I am meek and lowly in heart*—Meek toward all men, lowly toward God. As an instructor, I will show myself to be most mild, gentle, and forbearing; kind and condescending

Isa. 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

Isa. 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Prov. 6:16–17 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: ¹⁷A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Prov. 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

13 Prov. 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

14 Prov. 21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

*15 Lewis, C. S. Mere Christianity. HarperCollins, 2001, Chapter: "The Great Sin." Qtd. in "The Dangers of Pride in the Bible and Tips for Overcoming It." *Abundant Life*, 1970. <https://livingproof.co/the-dangers-of-pride-in-the-bible-and-tips-for-overcoming-it/>. Accessed 25 Dec. 2024.*

16 1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 Isa. 14:13–14 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

18 Gen. 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

19 Prov. 16:19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Zeph. 2:3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

Matt. 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Phil. 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Prov. 29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

20 1 Tim. 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

toward all my disciples, directing them with tenderness, patience, and lenity, in the way to pardon, life, and salvation, not imposing on them any unnecessary burdens: and, as an example, recommending by my practice both meekness and humility; meekness by bearing all kinds of injuries, and humility by condescending to do the meanest good offices to the meanest of mankind. Learn, then, of me to be meek and humble, both in disposition and behaviour; *and ye shall find rest to your souls*—That composure, tranquillity, and satisfaction which nothing but humility and meekness, with an entire subjection to me, can give. The original words may be properly rendered, *Ye shall find refreshment to your souls*, such as you would in vain seek elsewhere; refreshment, arising from clear manifestations of the divine favour, consoling influences of his Spirit, lively hopes of his glory, and sensible communion with him.

Because being *lowly and meek* is the Lord Jesus' true heavenly nature, then only He

can instruct men as to why it is so critical to keep unity in His church. It is also only through the Son of God and His divine nature that sinners can discover what a broken and contrite spirit actually is,²¹ leading a truly godly man to hate pride,²² whatever form it takes, either in himself or in others. Just as love is the first evidence listed in the fruit of the Spirit,²³ so will lowliness of heart characterize those who are truly being led by the Son of God and the humble and gentle Spirit He baptizes men with.²⁴

Meekness. The Greek word for *meekness* is #4240 *prautés*. *Strong's Lexicon* states the word's origin: "Derived from the Greek adjective *πραῦς* (*praus*), meaning 'gentle' or 'meek.'" *HELPS Word-studies* states that "It is a divinely-balanced virtue that can only operate through faith (cf. 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22-25²⁵)."²⁶ The *NAS Exhaustive Concordance* defines the word as simply

21 *Isa. 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

Ps. 51:16-17 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. ¹⁷*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

Isa. 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Matt. 5:3-4 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

Luke 18:13-14 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Ps. 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.
22 *Prov. 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

23 *Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

24 *Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Acts 1:4-5 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

25 *I Tim. 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

II Tim. 2:22-25 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³*But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.* ²⁴*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,* ²⁵*In*

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“gentleness.” While the King James Version translation of the Greek word for *lowliness* and *meekness* appears close in meaning, there is a distinct difference in that *lowliness* is a condition of the internal mind and spirit, whereas *meekness* and/or *gentleness* is that heavenly kindness that is directed towards others.

Other translations help in strengthening the true essence of the Greek word *prautés*:

(NIV) *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

(NLT) *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.*

(ESV) *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,*

(BSB) *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,*

(NASB) *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,*

There is no doubt that both *meekness* and *gentleness* are Christian virtues, but the emphasis here is not merely a continuation of the thought of *lowliness* of mind, which is an internal condition of the heart, but rather that of *meekness* and *gentleness*, which are purposed to be manifested toward all of God's creatures.

Longsuffering. The Greek word for *longsuffering* is #3115 *makrothumia*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word as “Patience,

Long-suffering, Forbearance.” *HELPS Word-studies* states of the word “properly, long-passion, i.e. waiting sufficient time before expressing anger. This avoids the premature use of force (retribution) that rises out of improper anger (a personal reaction).” *HELPS Word-studies* also states that “(*makrothymía*) embraces steadfastness and staying-power.” Whenever Christians are under trial or exposed to sin, either in themselves or in others, they will be under a degree of spiritual pressure. But this pressure or affliction should never be responded to with retaliation, vengeance, retribution and/or anger. This is not to say that sin should not be addressed or that it is wrong to stand against evil men. Sadly, there are many sinners who will never change, yet still patience is to be manifested toward them with the spiritual hope that they will recover themselves from their sin and the snare of the devil.²⁶

The cultural and historical background of the word is revealed in *Strong's Lexicon* as follows:

In the Greco-Roman world, patience was not always considered a virtue, as strength and immediate action were often valued. However, in Jewish and early Christian thought, patience was seen as a reflection of divine character. The concept of *makrothumia* was counter-cultural, promoting a lifestyle of endurance and forgiveness rather than revenge or immediate justice. This virtue was particularly important for early Christians who faced persecution and needed to maintain their faith and witness under pressure.

A manifestation of believers being *longsuffering* is that they will not, and shall not consider, rendering evil for evil. *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing:*

meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

²⁶ II Tim. 2:26 *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing (I Pet. 3:9). It is as believers are patient and longsuffering under trial and do not render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but instead respond with blessing that they ensure their own spiritual blessings in the future. All men reap as they have sown;²⁷ consequently, even when under great spiritual attack, it is never appropriate to respond to evil with evil. Vengeance is to be left to the Lord and His wisdom²⁸ and is never to be engaged in by those saved by Him.²⁹ Ultimately, good is to be sought, with the intention of overcoming evil with good.³⁰ Scripture also makes it abundantly clear that bestowing blessing, and not cursing, is the duty of the saved.³¹ *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head* (Rom. 12:20). The same thought is revealed in Exodus. *If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again* (Exod. 23:4). A good tree cannot bear evil fruit,³² and neither should a good and just man assume that there is ever an appropriate time to recompense evil for evil. To do so will only prove that he is not truly good himself.

Forbearing one another in love. The Greek word for *forbearing* is #430 *an-echó*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word

“to endure, to bear with, to tolerate, to hold up.” *Strong's* also reveals in regard to the cultural and historical background of the word—

In the Greco-Roman world, endurance was a valued virtue, often associated with strength and resilience. The early Christian community, living under Roman rule and often facing persecution, would have understood “*an-echó*” as a call to steadfastness and patience. This endurance was not passive but active, reflecting a commitment to maintain faith and unity despite external pressures.

At the base of *forbearing one another in love* lies possessing spiritual love for our fellow man.

The Greek word for *love* is #26 *agapé*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines its usage as—

Agapé is a term used in the New Testament to describe a selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. It is the highest form of love, often associated with the love of God for humanity and the love that believers are called to have for one another. Unlike other Greek words for love, such as “*eros*” (romantic love) or “*philia*” (brotherly love), *agapé* is not based on emotions or feelings but is an act of the will, characterized by a commitment to the well-being of others.

What is unique about the Greek word *agapé* is that it is a decision of both the

27 Gal. 6:7-8 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

28 Deut. 32:35 *To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.*

29 Rom. 12:19 *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

Prov. 20:22 *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*

30 Rom. 12:21 *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

31 Matt. 5:44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

Rom. 12:14 *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*

Rom. 12:17-20 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ²⁰Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

32 Matt. 7:18 *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

mind and will and is not merely a fleeting human emotion. Whereas divine love can be consistent and relied upon, human love, which is directly connected to human affinity, has no such spiritual foundation. To possess the love of God and to be forbearing toward others because of love for them is that which makes the Christian unique and distinct from the unsaved. *Agapé* is that form of divine love that is produced, prompted, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Just as love is a fruit of the Spirit,³³ so is forbearing one another in love a by-product of God's spiritual nature working Itself out through us.³⁴

Ephesians 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Greek word for *endeavouring* is #4704 *spoudazó*. It is defined by *Strong's Lexicon* as "To be diligent, to make every effort, to hasten, to be eager." The usage of the verb "*spoudazó*" conveys a sense of earnestness and diligence. It implies making a concerted effort or striving towards a goal with urgency and commitment. In the New Testament, it often refers to the diligence required in spiritual matters, such as maintaining unity, growing in faith, or fulfilling one's ministry." The culture and historical background of the term

"*spoudazó*" would have been understood as a call to action, urging individuals to pursue their duties with seriousness and dedication." *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word "properly, be swift (go fast, be speedy); (figuratively) to move speedily by showing full diligence (fully applying oneself); acting fervently (speedy commitment) to accomplish all that God assigns through faith." What is observed by these definitions of *spoudazó* is that the aforementioned qualities—*lowliness, meekness, and forbearing one another in love*—are the first steps in the believer *endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. It is also through putting on these qualities of the new man³⁵ that allows believers to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. To walk worthy of our call to Jesus Christ and the redemption that He has produced for us³⁶ is to earnestly strive and eagerly endeavor to keep the *unity of the Spirit*, which Christ has produced in the saved in the bond of *peace*.

Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Jesus Christ has established peace not only between God and man³⁷ but also between man and man.³⁸ All who have been given the Spirit³⁹ have been made to

33 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

34 Phil. 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

35 Eph. 4:24–32 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ²⁵Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. ²⁶Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷Neither give place to the devil. ²⁸Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. ²⁹Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. ³⁰And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³²And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

36 Eph. 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

37 Eph. 2:16 *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

38 Eph. 2:14 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

39 Matt. 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

share in the spiritual peace that exists not only between the Father and the Son⁴⁰ but also between those called to God through the Son.⁴¹ Peace is that which binds things together, even as friction and turmoil separate them. Peace is also associated with the reception and baptism of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus instructed His disciples that they would receive from Him. *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost* (John 20:19-22).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, John 20:21) *As my (better, the) Father hath*

sent me, even so send I you.—Comp. Note on John 17:18,⁴² where the words occur in prayer to the Father. As spoken here to the disciples they are the identification of them with Himself in His mediatorial work. He is the great Apostle (Hebrews 3:1⁴³); they are ambassadors for Christ, to whom He commits the ministry of reconciliation (2Corinthians 5:18⁴⁴ et seq.). He stands in the same relation to the Father as that in which they stand to Him. He declares to them, and they in His name are to declare to the world, the fulness of the Father's love, and the peace between man and God, witnessed to in His life and death. He and they stand also in the same relation to the world. At this very moment they are assembled with shut doors, for fear of the Jews, who are triumphing over Him as dead. But to that world, which will hate, persecute, and kill them, as it had hated, persecuted, and killed Him, they are sent as He was sent; they are to declare forgiveness, mercy, love, peace, as He had declared them, to every heart that does not harden itself against them; and they are to find in His presence, as He had ever found in the Father's presence, the support which will ever bring peace to their own hearts (John 14:27⁴⁵).

Acts 1:4-5 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts 2:1-4 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

Acts 19:5-6 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

40 Isa. 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

41 Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Eph. 2:14-17 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; ¹⁶And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

42 John 17:18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

43 Heb. 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

44 II Cor. 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

45 John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Peace is what Jesus preached to those who believe upon the cross,⁴⁶ and those saved by it should preach and carry this same message of peace, which Christ offers to those willing to forsake their sin and embrace belief in Himself. Wilhelmus à Brakel, a leader in the Dutch reformation movement of the 17th century, once stated that “Nothing will give you peace as long as your Maker is displeased with you.”⁴⁷ Basically, to truly walk with God and maintain spiritual relationship with Him, how we conduct ourselves with our neighbor is equally as important as how we cherish, love, and adore our God.

Ephesians 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Christ’s own redemptive work is the foundation of the message that Christ preached related to gaining eternal peace with God—revealing to us that at the center of all unity between God and man, and between man and man, is the Lord of peace. *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means* (II Thess. 3:16). *The Lord be with you all.* This verse is directly related to Isaiah 9:6, which foretold of the coming of the Son of God. *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace* (Isa. 9:6). Ultimately, it is the Lord Jesus, portrayed in Isaiah’s prophecy as the *Prince of Peace*, Who alone can impart that heavenly tranquility and serenity that exists in Himself and is the very essence of heaven. *Peace I leave with you,*

my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27). If anyone truly desires to possess peace in his soul, then he must embrace, follow, and believe upon the very One Whom God has purposed should introduce peace to the world.

(Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, John 14:27) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.—...He will leave them as a legacy the gift of “peace.” And this peace is more than a meaningless sound or even than a true wish. He repeats it with the emphatic “My,” and speaks of it as an actual possession which He imparts to them. “Peace on earth” was the angels’ message when they announced His birth; “peace to you” was His own greeting when He returned victorious from the grave.

The origin of the *peace* that Ephesians speaks of has its roots in the work of the Savior.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Isa. 53:5) The chastisement of our peace—That is, the chastisement by which our peace is effected or secured was laid upon him; or, he ‘took it upon himself,’ and bore it, in order that we might have peace. ... The work of religion in the soul is often represented as peace; and the Redeemer is spoken of as the great agent by whom that is secured. ‘For he is our peace’ (Ephesians 2:14–15, Ephesians 2:17; compare Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Romans 10:15⁴⁸). The phrase ‘upon him,’ means that the burden by which the peace of people

⁴⁶ Eph. 2:17 *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

⁴⁷ Brakel, Wilhelmus à. *The Christian’s Reasonable Service. Volume 2.* Originally published 1700.

⁴⁸ Eph. 2:14–15 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ⁴⁵Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

Eph. 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

was effected was laid upon him, and that he bore it.

It is through Jesus, and the *chastisement* for sin that was laid upon Him, that our peace with God is secured. Because sin was punished,⁴⁹ though not Christ's but our own by His death, it is now possible for those estranged from God by sin to find and experience peace with God. Because the Lord's people's sin was laid upon Jesus and He successfully bore it, then the peace that exists between the Father and the Son can now be joyously shared with those who believe upon Him. The ministry of the Son of God was a weighty one—a heavenly ministry purposed to produce peace between heaven and earth, the defiled and the holy, the

impure and the pure. In order for this to be done, Jesus needed to bear the punishment for human sin. The chastisement and judgment that God purposed for the world would rest and be the burden of the One sent to save it. It was a great spiritual responsibility that Jesus allowed Himself to be burdened with, a heavy weight dependent solely upon Himself, that would determine whether any born of the flesh could be redeemed from the punishment for sin—which is death—through being born of God.⁵⁰ Ultimately Jesus is every believer's peace, and those saved by Him should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, which every saved man shares in through spiritual baptism⁵¹ in the bond of peace.

Acts 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Rom. 10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

49 I Pet. 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

I Cor. 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

Rom. 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁸But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

I John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Col. 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

50 Ezek. 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Rom. 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Jas. 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Heb. 10:1-4 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. ³But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. ⁴For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

51 I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Tit. 3:4-5 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

I John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

John 1:12–13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 13

Ephesians 4:4–6

Ephesians 4:4–6 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

⁵*One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

⁶*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

THE great reason now as to why Christians are to pursue unity between each other lies in the fact that there is but *one body* by virtue of Christ, *one Spirit* given through Christ, and *one hope* of being gathered together by Christ. Ultimately for every true Christian there is also but *one Lord* Who reigns over them, *one faith* believed by them, and *one baptism* of the Spirit that confirms their relationship with *one God* and the *Father of all*

who believe. This same heavenly Father is *above all*, through *all*, and *in all* He saves. Because there is so much spiritual unity in those who believe and so much that each Christian shares with others chosen in Christ, then it is beyond reason why so much contention and division¹ exists in the church. It can only be because it is the flesh² and not the Spirit that truly governs so many of those who profess to be Christian in their lives.

One body. Just as there was but *one body* of the Savior, Who died upon the cross, even so there is but one holy and consecrated group of people saved by Him,³ from also one sacrifice for sin the Lord has formed, His own heavenly congrega-

1 I Cor. 1:10–13 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. ¹²Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. ¹³Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

2 I Cor. 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Jas. 3:14–16 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. ¹⁶For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

Jas. 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

3 I Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Gal. 3:26–28 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

tion. This body⁴ is defined as God's holy temple⁵ and is what constitutes the church of Christ. Hence, just as there is one Jerusalem, one Bethlehem, and one temple mount, so is there only a single, solitary heavenly people formed by God through His Son.⁶ In reality, this consecrated body of the chosen are even now citizens of heaven,⁷ apart from which there is no connection to heaven at all—so that if a man is not a true member of the body of Christ,⁸ forgiven by His blood,⁹ and made alive by His resurrection and ascension and possesses familial connection with the Savior,¹⁰ then he is not of the family of God, nor does the Lord esteem him as His own.

One Spirit. Just as there is but one body formed by Christ, there is also but *one Spirit* and one heavenly gift¹¹ that proves a man to have true relationship with God. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Rom. 8:9).

(Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:9) Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ—Thus residing in him, and governing him, whatever he may pretend; he is none of his—Not a disciple or member of Christ; not a Christian; not in a state of salvation. A plain, express declaration, which admits of no exception. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

4 I Cor. 12:18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

Eph. 1:22–23 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Col. 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

5 Eph. 2:20–22 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; ²²In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

6 Eph. 2:4–6 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;); ⁶And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

Rom. 8:29–30 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

7 Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

8 Eph. 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

Col. 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

I Cor. 12:12 *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

Eph. 4:15–16 *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: ¹⁶From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Rom. 12:4–5 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

9 Matt. 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Eph. 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

Col. 1:14 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

Rom. 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

10 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

11 Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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

John 4:10 *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

Just as there is one universal body of the Savior, so is there only *one Spirit* sent from heaven, which confirms entrance into it. This is why Jesus taught that for true admittance into the kingdom of heaven, a man must be born again¹² and undergo spiritual regeneration,¹³ which both confirms and produces heavenly sonship. The Holy Spirit is also the Lord's pledge and His anointing seal¹⁴ that believers possess, indicating a lasting covenant with Him, even as physical circumcision demonstrated this for Israel.¹⁵ Just as circumcision distinguished the seed of Abraham from the Gentiles, so does the Holy Spirit distinguish those consecrated by God from an unbelieving and ungodly world, estranged and separate from Him. Ultimately the Holy Spirit is that heavenly and spiritual anointing that seals the redeemed and openly confirms them as part of God's heavenly kingdom and family.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (II Cor. 1:21-22). To be accounted by God as a spiritual son and sealed as His own is the Lord's pledge of receiving greater blessings and riches to come.¹⁶ By the Lord sealing a believer as His own,¹⁷ through anointing him with the Holy Spirit, there is the promise of heavenly citizenship and a future of heavenly habitation with the Son of God. Being sealed with the Holy Spirit therefore proves spiritual adoption¹⁸ and provides spiritual assurance that all who possess the Spirit will share with the Son of God in heaven. Because the Holy Spirit is God's pledge and does not originate from man, then God has placed all responsibility upon Himself to fulfill His own Word. And just as Jesus was sealed by God and confirmed to be God's Son

12 John 3:5-8 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

13 Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

14 Eph. 1:13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

15 Gen. 17:12 *And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.*

16 I Cor. 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

17 Rev. 7:3 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

18 Rom. 8:15-17 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

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through His divine birth,¹⁹ further evidenced by the miracles He performed²⁰ and His resurrection from the dead,²¹ so also is the believer sealed by the heavenly Father through the Spirit Jesus sends²² to those saved through His death and resurrection. Practically, the Holy Spirit is the only veritable proof given to any that

they have been made children of God²³ and have been purposed for heavenly habitation.²⁴ Adding to this reality is the truth that actually being born of God resides not in the will of man but is solely an action prompted by the mind and will of God.²⁵ It is not something that an individual can produce for himself any more

19 *Isa. 9:6–7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

Matt. 1:18–25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

20 *Jesus turns water into wine: John 2:1–11*

Jesus heals the man's withered hand on the Sabbath: Matt. 12:9–14, Mark 3:1–6, Luke 6:6–11

Jesus raises a widow's son from the dead: Luke 7:11–17

Jesus heals the woman with an issue of blood: Matt. 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34, Luke 8:42–48

Jesus raises Jarius' daughter back to life: Matt. 9:18, 23–26, Mark 5:21–24, 35–43, Luke 8:40–42, 49–56

Jesus feeds the 5,000: Matt. 14:13–21, Mark 6:30–44, Luke 9:10–17, John 6:11–15

Jesus heals the deaf and dumb man: Mark 7:31–37

Jesus heals the blind man at Bethsaida: Mark 8:22–26

Jesus withers the fig tree on the road from Bethany: Matt. 21:18–22, Mark 11:12–14

21 *Matt. 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

I Cor. 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Rom. 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Rev. 1:5–6 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Acts 2:24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

22 *John 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

23 *I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

II Cor. 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Gal. 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

I John 3:2–3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

24 *Eph. 1:13–14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

25 *John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

than an unconceived child could will his own human birth into the world. In truth, every true Christian's adoption into the kingdom originates solely from the desire and will of the heavenly Father. It is He, Who chooses someone to be in Christ²⁶ and He, Who creates heavenly sonship through belief in Him. This is why no man can receive the Spirit via or through his own power, nor can he become a child of God through mere personal will simply because all spiritual sonship is the work of

God²⁷ and can never be produced through the will, desire, or fancy of any man. It is a gift from God²⁸ and must originate from Him. *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God* (John 1:13).

One hope of your calling. Every believer's spiritual election²⁹ has but one universal and celestial *hope*, which is joining the Son of God in heaven.³⁰ This future hope is the culmination of what being granted

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 1:48-49 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Eph. 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

1 Pet. 2:9-10 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Jer. 1:5-8 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. 6 Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. 7 But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. 8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

26 John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

27 Eph. 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

28 Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Eph. 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

29 Rom. 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Rom. 11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Deut. 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

30 John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

1 Thess. 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

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the right to become a son of God promises. There is also no greater spiritual belief that produces internal purification³¹ than the hope of being glorified with the Savior³² and being made to share in a heavenly body like unto His own. It is this spiritual hope that internally purifies the heart and soul of a man. It is also this hope³³ that the apostle Paul prayed the Ephesians might become enlightened to.³⁴

It has always been the will of God and His plan to provide both a hope and a future for His people. *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end* (Jer. 29:11). Other translations of this verse give a clearer understanding of its true meaning:

(NIV) *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

(NLT) *For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

(ESV) *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

(NKJV) *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

The reason God is spoken of as *the God of hope*³⁵ is that He provides through divine power heavenly hope for those previously without God and without hope in this world.³⁶ The hope that God gives to the believer through Jesus Christ is a *lively hope*, which has its genesis in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* (I Pet. 1:3).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Pet. 1:3) *Unto a lively hope.*—Or, *into a living hope.* Before this regeneration there was nothing to look forward to—at best a kind of dead-alive surmise that there *might* be something beyond the weary world. But as the animal we have imagined would find himself suddenly new-begotten into a state

31 I John 3:3 *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

32 Col. 3:4 *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

Heb. 2:10 *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

Rom. 8: 16-18 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

33 I John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Phil. 3:20-21 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

I Cor. 15:42-44 *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

34 Eph. 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

35 Rom. 15:13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

36 Eph. 2:12 *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

in which he was conscious of himself and of God, so we found ourselves new-begotten into a state of definite and most energetic expectation of whole *sæcula sæculorum*—worlds beyond worlds—of bliss before us.

It is through Christ's resurrection from the dead that spiritual regeneration³⁷ has become available and men can receive the Spirit of Christ within.³⁸ It is also this supernatural transformation from before being born only of the flesh,³⁹ and in sin,⁴⁰ to then being born of the Spirit,⁴¹ that gives hope of sharing with Christ in heaven. It is worthy of mention that it is only the Lord's holy and divine nature that is eternal,⁴² even as all things natural,

physical, and material must eventually dissolve and fade away.⁴³ Consequently to possess life in the heavenly kingdom to come, an individual must receive the nature of which this kingdom will be comprised. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption* (I Cor. 15:50).

(Benson Commentary, I Cor. 15:50) *Now this I say, brethren*—This I offer to your consideration as a great and important truth, that we must first undergo an entire change; *for flesh and blood*—Such as we are now clothed with; *cannot inherit the kingdom of God*—Cannot enter that happy place which Christ hath gone to prepare for the reception of his

37 Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

38 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

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

39 John 3:6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Ezek. 36:26 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

40 Ps. 51:5 *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

41 I John 3:9 *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

I John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

I John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

42 Isa. 40:28 *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

Ps. 90:2 *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

I Tim. 1:17 *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Deut. 33:27 *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.*

Rom. 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

43 I Pet. 3:10–11 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

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people, (John 14:7⁴⁴) cannot possess that kingdom which is wholly spiritual, because it affords no objects suited either to the senses or to the appetites of such a body.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 15:50) *Flesh and blood*—Bodies organized as ours now are. “Flesh and blood” denotes such bodies as we have here, bodies that are fragile, weak, liable to disease, subject to pain and death. They are composed of changing particles; to be repaired and strengthened daily; they are subject to decay, and are wasted away by sickness, and of course they cannot be suited to a world where there shall be no decay and no death.

It is also the prize of sharing with Christ and being made like Him that believers are challenged to press toward with the hope of receiving as a reward for their faith. *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 3:14).

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Phil. 3:14) The high calling; the upward, heavenward calling. God is calling us all upward, heavenward, by the voice of the Lord Jesus, who is the Word of God. Comp. Hebrews 2:1,⁴⁵ “Partakers of the heavenly calling.” The words, “in Christ Jesus,” are to be taken with “the high calling.” It is God who calls: he calls us in the person of Christ, by the voice of Christ, “Come unto me.” “It was his will that thou shouldst run the race below; he gives the crown above.

One Lord. To be saved by God demands that sinners make God’s Son, Jesus Christ, Lord of their lives. It is also the lordship of Jesus Christ that forms the foundation for unity among all those saved by Him. Since all Christians share the same Lord, there should never exist anything among them other than spiritual unity.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:5) The argument here is, that there ought to be unity among Christians, because they have one Lord and Saviour. They have not different Saviours adapted to different classes; not one for the Jew and another for the Greek; not one for the rich and another for the poor; not one for the bond and another for the free. There is but one. He belongs in common to all as their Saviour; and he has a right to rule over one as much as over another. There is no better way of promoting unity among Christians than by reminding them that they have the same Saviour. . . . Let two men who have never seen each other before, meet in a distant land, and feel that they have the same Redeemer, and their hearts will mingle into one. They are not aliens, but friends. A cord of sympathy is struck more tender than that which binds them to country or home and though of different nations, complexions, or habits, they will feel that they are one. Why should contentions ever arise between those who have the same Redeemer?

Biblically Jesus Christ and obedience to Him are the only path to *salvation*, and no man, without exception, can come to, approach, and/or be accepted by God other than through the One sent to declare Him. *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him* (Heb. 5:9). This verse is emphatic when it reveals that the Lord’s salvation is *offered to them that obey him* and only those people; consequently, if there is not obedience to the Son of God, then there exists no realistic hope of receiving salvation from Him. There is no ambiguity on this topic, and to disregard the necessity of it must be to one’s own peril. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6).

⁴⁴ John 14:7 *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

⁴⁵ Heb. 2:1 *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 14:6) *No man cometh to the Father but by me*—To come to the Father is to obtain his favor, to have access to his throne by prayer, and finally to enter his kingdom. No man can obtain any of these things except by the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. By coming by him is meant coming in his name and depending on his merits. We are ignorant, and he alone can guide us. We are sinful, and it is only by his merits that we can be pardoned. We are blind, and he only can enlighten us. God has appointed him as the Mediator, and has ordained that all blessings shall descend to this world through him. Hence he has put the world under his control; has given the affairs of men into his hand, and has appointed him to dispense whatever may be necessary for our peace, pardon, and salvation, Acts 4:12; Acts 5:31.⁴⁶

Jesus reveals that there is no other path to heaven other than making Him, Lord of your life.⁴⁷ This implies that both His words⁴⁸ and His Spirit are given complete and utmost control over both body and soul. Where once the sinner could do as

he willed,⁴⁹ now there must be a willing compliance, agreement, and conformity to God's will. This begins with and must include the freewill choice of making God's Son Lord, Master, and Sovereign Ruler over ourselves. It is this that the Lord requires for any to be saved; and if this condition is not met, then the sinner must give an account and suffer the punishment for all sin he has committed against God.⁵⁰ Understandably, the Lord will not allow His Son's universal and eternal authority, which has already been granted to Him,⁵¹ to be either compromised or not be adhered to. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ* (Acts 2:36). By Jesus' resurrection from the dead it is proved that Jesus Christ is Lord, both of the dead and the living.⁵² Since Jesus has been enthroned as King of the heavens, it is a great insult to God for sinners not to recognize, submit to, and hail Him as Lord of the earth.

46 Acts 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Acts 5:31 *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

47 Rom. 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Acts 2:36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Rom. 14:9 *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

Phil. 2:9-11 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

¹⁰*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

48 John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

49 John 21:18 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*

50 John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

II Thess. 1:8-9 *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

51 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

52 Rom. 14:9 *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

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(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 2:36) The word "lord" properly denotes "proprietor, master, or sovereign." Here it means clearly that God had exalted him to be the king so long expected; and that he had given him dominion in the heavens, or, as we should say, made him ruler of all things. ... Sinners, in opposing the Saviour, are at war with their living and mighty sovereign and Lord. He has all power, and it is not safe to contend against the judge of the living and the dead.

One faith. In the true gospel of Jesus Christ there is but *one faith*. This faith includes belief in Jesus' lordship, that a man must be born again to enter heaven,⁵³ that all men are sinners and unworthy of God,⁵⁴ a confession of the Godhead,⁵⁵ the doctrine of repentance,⁵⁶ faith,⁵⁷ and denial of self,⁵⁸ and the forgiveness of sin through Christ's offering Himself for sin.⁵⁹ On these biblical precepts rest the

faith of Jesus Christ. If there is a departure from even one of these established biblical doctrines, then it is not the faith of Jesus Christ that is being practiced. It also should be emphasized and not forgotten that what is absolutely not included and is not demanded by God to be saved is being a member of a particular church or denomination—that he must follow some peculiar religious tradition or be of the "right" religious affiliation to be saved. This is simply because there is but one foundation, Jesus Christ, and it is He, and not any man or group of men, nor any rule of man, that constitutes true faith in God. *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ* (I Cor. 3:11).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 3:11) *Which is Jesus Christ*—... The meaning is, that no true church can be reared which does

53 John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

54 Rom. 3:10–19 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: ¹⁴Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵Their feet are swift to shed blood: ¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their ways: ¹⁷And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸There is no fear of God before their eyes. ¹⁹Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

55 Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

56 Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

57 John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Rom. 10:9–10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

John 6:28–29 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Acts 16:30–31 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? ³¹And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

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

58 Luke 9:23–24 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. ²⁴For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

59 I Pet. 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

not embrace and hold the true doctrines respecting him—those which pertain to his incarnation, his divine nature, his instructions, his example, his atonement, his resurrection, and ascension. The reason why no true church can be established without embracing the truth as it is in Christ is, that it is by him only that people can be saved; and where This doctrine is missing, all is missing that enters into the essential idea of a church. The fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion must be embraced, or a church cannot exist and where those doctrines are denied no association of people can be recognized as a church of God.

Ultimately if Jesus Christ is not Lord of a man's life and recognized as the sole Head

of His church, then what may be regarded as Christian faith is not really faith at all. This is also why if the Son of God is not the foundation of Christian doctrine, and this cannot be merely in word,⁶⁰ then whatever other religious counterfeit has been formed has its origin in man and is neither of God nor will it be endorsed by Him so that if Jesus Christ is not the true center of a man's faith and practice, then he actually possesses no legitimate faith at all, and whatever is practiced surely does not have its source in the Father and His Son, Whom He sent to save the world. Not to understand and believe this truth is to risk and actually abandon having connection to the Savior at all.

⁶⁰ *Matt. 7:21–23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 14

Ephesians 4:5

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

ONE baptism. In the church and among various groups of Christians where there has been the most biblical controversy, *baptism* has been the subject. Yet Scripture clearly reveals here that there is but *one baptism*, endorsed by God, which all true believers should seek to lead others into.¹ The great reason for such dissension in the church is because the baptism that is debated and has even separated churches is the baptism of John. Yet John's baptism of water was purposed by God to be only a precursor, forerunner, and predecessor to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, which ultimately would be performed by God's Son. An early record of John's baptism is found in the gospel of Matthew. So connected is John to this baptism that he is defined in the gospels as *John the Baptist*.

Matthew 3:1–11 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

² *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

³ *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

⁴ *And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

⁵ *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

⁶ *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

⁷ *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

⁸ *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*

⁹ *And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

¹⁰ *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

¹¹ *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

What is observed here is that John's ministry was a precursor and forerunner to Jesus' ministry, which would usher in a new covenant of the Spirit and not of the

¹ *Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

letter (v. 3).² John's ministry of repentance was purposed to prepare people for the arrival of the Son of God: *The voice of one crying in the wilderness* [John], *Prepare ye the way of the Lord* [Jesus]. It is stated that John came *preaching* (v. 1) the divinely inspired message of *Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (v. 2). Ultimately John's ministry was purposed to call sinners to repentance in order that they could ready themselves for the much greater heavenly appearance of God's Son. The lesser ministry of the prophet needed to arise and publicly herald the much greater ministry of the Savior. The apostle Paul confirms the purpose of John's ministry in the book of Acts when addressing the saints at Ephesus, inquiring if those who had believed had received the Holy Ghost upon receiving John's baptism. The apostle Paul's message reveals that this baptism alone he deemed as insufficient for confirming salvation if those who believed had failed to be filled with the Holy Spirit upon receiving it. To Paul and John true salvation could be confirmed only if repentant believers received the Holy Spirit. This could occur only if there was true belief in the Holy Spirit's Sender.

Acts 19:1-6 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. ³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. ⁴ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

The apostle revealed to these early believers that water alone cannot save, that people must sincerely and genuinely believe on the name of the Lord Jesus since it is only belief³ and undergoing the baptism of the Spirit⁴ that Jesus performs that pro-

2 II Cor. 3:4-6 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: ⁵Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; ⁶Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

3 Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Rom. 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

John 6:28-29 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

John 6:45-47 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. ⁴⁶Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. ⁴⁷Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

4 Acts 19:5-6 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Acts 11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

duce true salvation. If men truly desire to be saved, it must be a spiritual baptism performed by the Son of God—not just a material baptism performed by men—for true entrance into the kingdom of God to take place.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Acts. 19:4) John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance.—The words may fairly be regarded as giving the summary of what was actually a fuller teaching. The distinctive point in it was that the baptism of John was, by his own declaration, simply provisional and preparatory.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts. 19:4) John verily baptized—John did indeed baptize.

With the baptism of repentance—Having special reference to repentance, or as a profession that they did repent of their sins. See the notes on Matthew 3:6.⁵

Saying unto the people—The design of his preaching was to turn the people from their sins, and to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah. He therefore directed their attention principally to him that was to come, John 1:15, John 1:22–27.⁶

By reading the Acts record and John's revelation as to what sort of baptism is

critical to save, it is clear that John's ministry was solely purposed to lead people into a much greater ministry, which is belief in the Son of God and to become spiritually baptized by Him. John's baptism was, as Ellicott wrote, "simply provisional and preparatory." As we have seen, his message was a call to repent, which is absolutely fundamental before there can be any true belief in the Savior.⁷ This is why those who came to John, the Scriptures reveal, came confessing their sins. It was also this heart of being conscious of and sorrowful for sin that demonstrated genuine repentance for it. *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins* (Matt. 3:6). What John's ministry of calling people to repentance also teaches us is that before there can be true belief in the Savior, sinners must approach the Lord in an attitude of sincere, genuine, and heartfelt regret for their sin. But to wrongly conclude that mere water or even simply repentance alone is enough to cleanse and provide entrance into heaven reveals a lack of both biblical knowledge and spiritual understanding. Any honest preacher will also confirm that he has performed water baptism on a number of people who never sincerely repented of their sin or truly believed upon the Savior.

Acts 10:44–45 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. ⁴⁵And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Isa. 32:15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

Ezek. 39:29 Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

5 Matt. 3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 John 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

John 1:22–27 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? ²³He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. ²⁴And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. ²⁵And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

²⁶John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; ²⁷He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

7 Luke 18:13–14 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

This has been clearly demonstrated when after undergoing John's baptism of water only, the Lord Jesus' words were neither obeyed nor adhered to.⁸ This is not an isolated incident in Christian ministry, when John's baptism is performed but the Holy Spirit is not received. However, the Scripture clearly reveals that if a person is truly born of God,⁹ through genuine belief in the Son of God, and gifted the Holy Spirit from Him, then he cannot return to a previous life of sin and will not abandon true religion or obedience to the one in Whose name he was baptized. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God* (I John 3:9). The *sin* spoken of here is a continuance in sin and/or a return to a life governed by it. Undoubtedly all men both will and do sin; this is why God has made provision for the forgiveness of sin.¹⁰ Yet he who has truly been begotten

of God, through receiving the Holy Spirit into his heart, has been supernaturally imparted a divine power, much stronger and more influential than the sinful flesh that once ruled him. Consequently, once a person receives God's divine nature, a life of sin cannot be reentered into, simply because the Lord's holy nature has embedded itself in the repentant person's heart and will prohibit following or returning to a life governed by the flesh. Moreover, if only water baptism is performed without reception of the Spirit, then spiritual adoption has not occurred¹¹ nor has the christened one had his sinful heart regenerated and transformed by God.¹² It is solely possession of the Holy Spirit that proves true spiritual sonship. For none are born of God, Who is Spirit, unless from Him they are given the Spirit. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you* (Rom. 8:9). *Now if any man have not the Spirit of*

8 John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

John 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

9 John 1:12–13 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

I John 2:29 *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*
I John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

10 I John 2:1–2 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ²And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Isa. 43:25–26 *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. ²⁶Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.*

Acts 10:43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

Ps. 103:2–3 *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

Matt. 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Col. 1:13–14 *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

II Cor. 5:21 *For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

11 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

12 Ezek. 36:26 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

Christ, he is none of his. The Old Testament has many prophecies concerning how the Spirit God would send would also be the agent used to change people's hearts.

Ezekiel 36:26–27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

Ezekiel 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with

all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Sin lives within a man's heart, which is also where his spiritual defilement originates; hence, no mere external cleansing can reach where sin makes its natural abode. For this, God's Spirit, Who is righteous, must supplant a man's natural and carnal nature, which is flesh. No carnal nature, the Lord has proclaimed, can ever be justified in His sight.¹⁴ *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man* (Matt. 15:19–20).

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Matt. 15:19) Evil thoughts are the preparation of all other sins, and have a pernicious influence on the character. We are very much what we think. That on which our minds are fixed, that which is the chief object presented to our inward sight, shapes our disposition and life. High and noble thoughts elevate and purify; low and mean thoughts debase and pollute. The wickedness in a man springs from within; he is guilty of it. If he admits the tempter, succumbs to his seductions, it is his own will that is in fault, encouraging the evil imagination, and not at once resisting, abhorring, and repelling it. Well may we pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10); and remember the wise man's injunction, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

¹³ Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

¹⁴ Rom. 8:8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Rom. 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

John 6:63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

Rom. 3:10–12 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Rom. 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Rom. 8:13 *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Similar to true circumcision, which is *one inwardly and is that of the heart*,¹⁵ Jesus' baptism of the Spirit directly affects and influences the heart. This is also why physical circumcision did not by itself prove a man a Jew if the individual's heart was never touched nor God's Word sincerely believed by him. It was also for a stiff, spiritually resistant, and uncircumcised stubborn heart that Stephen reproved the Jewish leaders in his day. *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye* (Acts 7:51).

(Benson Commentary, Acts 7:51) *Ye stiff-necked*—Inflexible and obstinate sinners, not bowing your necks to God's yoke; and *uncircumcised in heart and ears*—So that you will not hearken to instruction, or be seriously affected with it. This they immediately showed. See Acts 7:54; Acts 7:57.¹⁶ So far were they from receiving the word of God with their hearts, that they would not hear it even with their ears.

The Word of God abounds as to where sin originates, which is from within the heart of man. It is therefore this sinful heart of fallen man that must be changed before true salvation is accomplished.

Jeremiah 17:9–10 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

¹⁰*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Genesis 6:5–7 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

⁶*And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

⁷*And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

Psalm 78:8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

Romans 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Hebrews 3:7–11 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁹*When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.*

¹⁰*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*

¹¹*So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

It is worth noting and should not be omitted that there are many who take comfort in water baptism, and we would never seek to remove this spiritual comfort from them and also would never, as with the apostle Peter, *forbid water. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* (Acts 10:47). But for true sanctification of the life, the Holy Spirit must be possessed.

¹⁵ Rom. 2:29 *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

¹⁶ Acts 7:54 *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. Acts 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*

(Geneva Study Bible, Acts 10:47) [Water] Baptism does not sanctify or make those holy who receive it, but is an outward sign to the world of the profession of faith.

Jesus also demonstrated to His disciples how it would be He Himself Who would send the Holy Ghost at that time, when God had purposed He should be sent, when Christ *breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*

John 20:21–22 *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

²²*And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 20:22) *He breathed on them*—It was customary for the prophets to use some significant act to represent the nature of their message. See Jeremiah 13; Jeremiah 18, etc. In this case the act of breathing was used to represent the nature of the influence that would come upon them, and the source of that influence. When man was created, God breathed into him the breath of life, Genesis 2:7.¹⁷ The word rendered "spirit" in the Scriptures denotes wind, air, breath, as well as Spirit. Hence, the operations of the Holy Spirit are compared to the wind, John 3:8; Acts 2:2.¹⁸

Receive ye the Holy Ghost—His breathing on them was a certain sign or pledge that they would be endowed with the influences of the Holy Spirit.

This act of Jesus breathing on His disciples simulated their future promise of being given the Holy Spirit. This act by Christ paralleled God breathing into Adam, the first man, the breath of life. *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul* (Gen. 2:7). Before His ascension, Jesus gave His disciples explicit instructions that needed to be obeyed before they could receive the promised Comforter,¹⁹ Whom Jesus said would remain with them after His future departure into heaven.

Acts 1:4 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

It is from the Lord Jesus that the disciples had first heard of receiving the Holy Spirit, and it was through the Son of God that they would ultimately be given the Holy Spirit. It was this spiritual baptism that Jesus had promised, and very soon His promise of sending the Spirit would be fulfilled.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 1:4) *But wait for the promise of the Father*—For the fulfillment of the promise respecting the descent of the Holy Spirit made by the Father.

¹⁷ *Gen. 2:7* *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

¹⁸ *John 3:8* *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Acts 2:2 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

¹⁹ *John 14:16* *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

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Which ye have heard of me—Which I have made to you. See John 14:16, John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7–13.²⁰

The timing of this outpouring of the Spirit is also biblically significant in that it occurred on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which was exactly fifty days from the feast of Passover, when Jesus was crucified as the Passover lamb. Just as Pentecost was a feast celebrating the law given to Moses—on this same biblically significant day—God through His Son poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit from heaven. The timing of the outpouring of the Spirit was purposed to reveal the introduction of a new covenant between God and man,

which had begun with Jesus' death paying the debt for sin.²¹ The fifty days between Jesus' death and the giving of the Spirit is also telling in that the number fifty in Scripture denotes freedom.²² The Year of Jubilee is also connected with the number fifty to celebrate release. This year was the completion of seven cycles of seven sabbatical years. It was a year in which debts were forgiven, slaves were freed,²³ and property restored to its original owner.²⁴ It generally occurred but once in a person's lifetime. Thus, the Year of Jubilee was a very much anticipated event for those who were either slaves or in great financial bondage. It was purposed to restore certain social and economic conditions

20 John 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:7–13 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me;¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

21 Jer. 31:31 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

Heb. 8:8 *For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:*

Heb. 8:13 *In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

Heb. 12:24 *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

22 John 8:36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

23 Lev. 25:10 *And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family:*

Lev. 25:39–41 *And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant:⁴⁰ But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile.⁴¹ And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.*

Lev. 25:54 *And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubile, both he, and his children with him.*

Lev. 25:28 *But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.*

24 Lev. 25:13 *In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.*

Lev. 25:33 *And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in the year of jubile: for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel.*

Lev. 27:24 *In the year of the jubile the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land did belong.*

to all Israelites. Consequently, the timing of the Holy Spirit being sent fifty days after Jesus' death, as with the Year of Jubilee, signified the sinner's complete and total release from sin and mirrored what that special and holy day was purposed to accomplish.

The historical record in Acts 2 begins to reveal the long-anticipated event of God sending His Spirit, who not only would now be given to only a few blessed individuals²⁵ but also would become available to all who believed upon the Savior.

Acts 2:1-4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

²*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

³*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This early Christian record reveals the first occurrence of Jesus' baptizing His followers with the Holy Spirit and fire.²⁶ This fulfilled John the Baptist's prophecy of the One coming, Who was much greater than himself and Who would perform a much greater baptism of the Spirit. This baptism of fire, as symbolized by *cloven tongues like as of fire* sitting upon those who were given the Spirit, was intended to reveal the internal purification that was taking place. The *cloven tongues like as of fire* coming down from heaven symbolized God's cleansing of people's hearts and burning up sin in their lives. Fire was often used in the Old Testament to signify God's acceptance of offerings, as with Gideon's offering.²⁷ This revealed that the Lord had graciously accepted the worship being offered by those who had the Spirit. Fire was likewise connected to Elijah when he called fire down from heaven to consume his offering, and it revealed

²⁵ Jdg. 3:10 *And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.*

Jdg. 6:34 *But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.*

Jdg. 11:29 *Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. Gen. 41:38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*

Exod. 31:1-3 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: ³And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.*

Num. 11:25 *And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.*

Jdg. 14:6 *And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.*

I Sam 16:13 *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.*

²⁶ Matt. 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

²⁷ Jdg. 6:21 *Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.*

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God's presence in his ministry.²⁸ It was a seraphim who touched Isaiah's lips with a burning coal that symbolized the purification of his sin and his speech.²⁹ Fire is also said in Scripture to be the element that will be used at the last day, when every man will be required to stand before the judgment seat of Christ,³⁰ a time of heavenly judgment when what men have done upon the earth and the works in which they have been engaged in their bodies will be tried by fire to ascertain their true worth.³¹

Ultimately the baptism of Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit radically changed the hearts and lives of the early Christians and formed for them a completely new view of religion, whereby the inside of the sinner's heart was transformed, something that no mere form of external cleansing, even John's baptism of water, could accomplish.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Acts 2:3) cloven tongues, like as of fire, &c.—“disparted tongues,” that is, tongue-shaped, flame-like appearances, rising from

28 *I Kgs. 18:20–40 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. ²¹And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. ²²Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: ²⁴And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. ²⁵And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. ²⁶And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. ²⁷And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. ²⁸And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. ³⁰And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. ³¹And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: ³²And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. ³³And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. ³⁴And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. ³⁵And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. ³⁶And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. ³⁷Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. ³⁸Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. ⁴⁰And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*

29 *Isa. 6:6–7 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*

30 *II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

31 *I Cor. 3:13–15 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

a common center or root, and resting upon each of that large company:—beautiful visible symbol of the burning energy of the Spirit now descending in all His plenitude upon the Church, and about to pour itself through every tongue, and over every tribe of men under heaven!

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Acts 2:3) *Cloven tongues*; to signify the variety of languages which the apostles should be enabled to speak, to qualify them to preach the gospel unto all nations, and to remove the obstacle which the confusion of tongues caused.

Like as of fire; which represented,

1. The light that the apostles should impart;
2. The fervent heat and zeal which they should be endowed with;
3. The gospel's spreading in the world, and carrying all before it, prevailing over all errors;
4. The purity and holiness which they and all that preach the gospel ought to appear withal.

And it sat upon each of them; remained, as far as was necessary for the founding of the Christian religion; and was not, as the gift of prophecy, bestowed only occasionally, as on Nathan, Samuel.

Once Jesus had ascended to the Father and had fully completed the redemption of man, He sent the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, to those chosen by Him^{32, i}. It is also this same Jesus Who died and is now alive, Who now holds the keys to both hell and death—so that if a man truly desires a place in heaven and an escape

from hell, then only the Son of God can make it possible. Barnes' commentary on Revelation 1:18 holds great insight regarding the present heavenly authority of Him Who died and rose again and ultimately sends the promised Holy Spirit to those who believe upon Him.

Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rev. 1:18) *I am he that liveth, and was dead*—I was indeed once dead, but now I live, and shall continue to live forever. This would at once identify him who thus appeared as the Lord Jesus Christ, for to no one else could this apply. He had been put to death; but he had risen from the grave. This also is given as a reason why John should not fear; and nothing would allay his fears more than this. He now saw that he was in the presence of that Saviour whom more than half a century before he had so tenderly loved when in the flesh, and whom, though now long absent, he had faithfully served, and for whose cause he was now in this lonely island. His faith in his resurrection had not been a delusion; he saw the very Redeemer before him who had once been laid in the tomb.

Behold, I am alive forevermore—I am to live forever. Death is no more to cut me down, and I am never again to slumber in the grave. As he was always to live, he could accomplish all his promises, and fulfil all his purposes. The Saviour is never to die again. He can, therefore, always sustain us in our troubles; he can be with us in our death. Whoever of our friends die, he will not die; when we die, he will still be on the throne.

³² *John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

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Amen—A word here of strong affirmation—as if he had said, it is “truly,” or “certainly so.” See the notes on Revelation 1:7.³³ This expression is one that the Saviour often used when he wished to give emphasis, or to express anything strongly. Compare John 3:3; John 5:25.³⁴

And have the keys of hell and of death—The word rendered “hell”—*ᾗδης* *Hadēs*, “Hades”—refers properly to the underworld; the abode of departed spirits; the region of the dead. This was represented as dull and gloomy; as enclosed with walls; as entered through gates which were fastened with bolts and bars. For a description of the views which prevailed among the ancients on the subject, see the Luke 16:23 note,³⁵ and Job 10:21–22 notes.³⁶ To hold the key of this, was to hold the power over the invisible world. It was the more appropriate that the Saviour should represent himself as having this authority, as he had himself been raised from the dead by his own power (compare John 10:18³⁷), thus showing that the dominion over this dark world was entrusted to him.

And of death—A personification. Death reigns in that world. But to his wide-extended realms the Saviour holds the key, and can have access to his empire when he pleases,

releasing all whom he chooses, and confining there still such as he shall please.

Both life and death are in the power of Jesus Christ: the power to admit into heaven those called by God through Himself³⁸ and the authority to send to hell those who reject His divine and exalted position as Lord of both heaven and earth.³⁹ Failure to fear the Son of God and His heavenly authority is ignorance that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow. This includes not merely the saved but also all those rebellious and insubordinate to divine rule, who both have, and still do, refuse to submit to the Son of God’s heavenly authority. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth* (Phil. 2:10).

(*Matthew Poole’s Commentary*, Phil. 2:10) *Every knee should bow*: bowing of the knee is meant metonymically, and metaphorically, because some of those hereafter named, from whom the homage is due, have neither knees nor tongues, yet must, either willingly or by constraint, yield subjection and obedience to the sovereign authority of Christ, here and hereafter, Matthew 11:27 28:18

33 Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

34 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

35 Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

36 Job 10:21–22 Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; 22A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

37 John 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

38 Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

39 Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

John 5:22,23 Ac 3:15;⁴⁰ ... Then shall his equality with his Father, and his superlative glory as Mediator, be manifested to all, good and bad, angels as well as men, who shall be subjected to his sovereign Majesty, as the Lord God omnipotent; the good willingly, and the bad by constraint, Isaiah 45:23 Acts 17:31 Romans 2:16 14:10,11 2 Corinthians 5:10.⁴¹

It is solely through and by way of faith in Jesus that men are saved⁴² and through rejection of Him that they remain condemned.⁴³ In Christ, God's eternal life can be found, and apart from Him *no man* will receive that internal spiritual cleansing of the Holy Spirit, which trans-

forms the heart and proves true admittance into heaven.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Jesus' words *no man* are emphatic, and this includes all those born of the flesh who through their natural and sinful birth are unworthy of heaven.⁴⁴ When Jesus said, *No man* He meant *No man*, and God's Word is unequivocally transparent on this point. Being allowed entrance into the Father's holy presence is possible only through the Son, even as no man can see the Father beyond whom Jesus reveals Him to⁴⁵—so that if any truly desire to be

40 Matt. 11:27 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. John 5:22–23 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: ²³That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

Acts 3:15 *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.*

41 Isa. 45:23 *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*

Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Rom. 2:16 *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

Rom. 14:10–11 *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

II Cor. 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

42 John 6:28–29 *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 6:45–47 *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. ⁴⁶Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. ⁴⁷Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Acts 10:43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

Acts 16:13 *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.*

43 John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

44 Rom. 8:8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

45 John 17:25–26 *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. ²⁶And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

saved, they must repent (of which John's baptism was indicative) and believe upon the name of Jesus Christ, which alone can produce receiving the Spirit of God. This is the *one baptism* that Ephesians speaks of, baptism not of the earth nor of any material element performed by earthly men, including even John the Baptist, whom Jesus referred to when saying that of all those *born of women*, there was none greater.⁴⁶ No, this baptism, this heavenly baptism, which actually saves men, needs to descend from heaven and can be sent only from Him Who now sits in heaven.⁴⁷ It is a spiritual baptism performed not by any man or a group of men, and surely not any religious and/or human institution. Ultimately salvation is solely a work of God and can be performed only by Him.

In closing, let us consider Jesus' words that a man must be *born again* before he can enter the kingdom of God. Jesus first taught this revolutionary truth to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews who sought to understand the great importance of Christ's ministry and the breathtaking power of God demonstrated by Him.

John 3:1–8 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:*

² *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou*

art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

³ *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

⁴ *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

⁵ *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

⁶ *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

⁷ *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

⁸ *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

At first there might seem a discrepancy in verse five when Jesus said that a man must be *born of water and of the Spirit* to be saved. But the discrepancy is handled when it is understood that the figure of speech *hendiadys* is used here, when two nouns are used but only one thing is meant.⁴⁸ The real water that

John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

46 Matt. 11:11 *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

47 Ps. 110:1 *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Mark 16:19 *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

Matt. 22:44 *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?* Heb. 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;* 48 *Hen-di'-a-dys*, from *ēv* (*hen*), one, *διὰ* (*dia*), by, *δύο* (*dis*) two (from *δύο*, two). Lit., one by means of two. Two words employed, but only one thing, or idea, intended. One of the two words expresses the thing, and the other (of synonymous, or even different, signification, not a second thing or idea) intensifies it by being changed (if a noun) into an adjective of the superlative degree, which is, by this means, made especially emphatic.

The figure is truly oriental, and exceedingly picturesque. It is found in Latin as well as in Hebrew and Greek, and is very frequently used in both Old and New Testaments.

would cleanse was that spiritual water that Ezekiel spoke of, which only God could provide.

Ezekiel 36:25–26 *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be*

clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

²⁶ *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

The two words are of the same parts of speech: *i.e.*, two nouns (or two verbs) always joined together by the conjunction “and.” The two nouns are always in the same case. ...

John 3:5.—This is literally, “Except a man shall have been begotten of water and spirit.” There is no article to either of the two nouns.

That only one thing is meant by the two words is clear from verses 6 and 8, where only the Spirit (the one) is mentioned.

The Lord is speaking to Nicodemus of “earthly things” (see verse 12). And as “a master in Israel,” he knew (or ought to have known) perfectly well the prophecy of Ezekiel 36:25–27 concerning the kingdom (not the Church). Concerning Israel, in the day of their restoration to their own land, Jehovah had declared: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ... And I will put my spirit within you,” etc.

The cleansing of that day is not to be with literal water, as in the ceremonial cleansings of the Law, but with the Spirit of God.

Hence only one thing is meant:—“Except a man be begotten of water, yes-and spiritual water too, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” That spiritual water stands, by another figure (Metonymy), for the Holy Spirit Himself: as is clear from John 7:38–39: “water—(But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive ...).”

Hence there is no reference here to ceremonial or ecclesiastical water-but to that baptism of the Spirit which is the one indispensable condition of entering into the kingdom of God; a moral sphere, which includes and embraces the Church of God, here and now, as well as the future kingdom foretold by God through the prophets. ...

[Another use of hendiadys in respect to the Holy Spirit, is a verse we have already covered.]

Matthew 3:11.—“He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

First observe that there are no articles. It is ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ (*en pneumati hagiō kai puri*), with Holy Spirit and fire: *i.e.*, with Holy Spirit, yes-and burning purifying spirit too. Not two things, but one thing: Judgment!

The contrast is with John’s baptism, which was with water which mingled together the chaff and the wheat (as the water sign has done in all ages). But the new baptism of Christ should not be like that. It would separate the chaff from the wheat by burning it up, as the Baptist goes on to declare, without a break in his words: “whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” The “fire” in verse 11 is different from the “fire” in verse 12. In verse 11 it is a figure for purifying and cleansing; and in verse 12 it is a literal fire that is meant. But the effect of its operations are the same in each case.

The Baptist is speaking, not of the Church, but of Christ and His kingdom, as was prophesied in Isaiah 4:3–4: “And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning”: *i.e.*, by spirit of judgment—His consuming.

This is the purging of the floor, and the burning up of the chaff, which the Baptist speaks of in verse 12. John only foretold it; but Christ shall do it in the day referred to in Isaiah 4:1–6

“The Spirit” is the Worker, and “the fire” denotes His operations, searching, consuming, and purifying. The day of the Lord’s coming will be “like a refiner’s fire ... And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver” (Malachi 3:1–4). That day “shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble (as in Matthew 3:12): and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts.” Malachi 4:1 (3:19).

Bullinger, Ethelbert W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. “Hendiadys; or Two for One.” *StudyLight.org*. Baker Book House, 1968, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/eng/bullinger/h/hendiadys-or-two-for-one.html>.

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The *water* spoken of here, as in John's baptism, originates from the time in the Old Testament when priests would sprinkle water on unclean persons, symbolically purifying them. *And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean* (Num. 8:7). This cleansing, this outward sprinkling with water, performed by the priests symbolized a greater cleansing of the Spirit to come. This heavenly cleansing is that which no earthly priest and surely no man can perform—but only the Lord Himself.

(*Benson Commentary*, Ezek. 36:25) *I will sprinkle clean water upon you*—The expression here alludes to those legal purifications which were made by sprinkling water upon the unclean persons: see Numbers 8:7; Numbers 19:13.⁴⁹ But the cleansing intended is plainly that of the soul, by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon men's consciences to take away their guilt, (see Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 12:24,⁵⁰) and by the grace of the Holy Spirit sprinkled on the whole soul, to purify it from all corrupt inclinations and dispositions; both which blessings are received by faith in Christ, and in the promises of God made through him: see Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:14; Acts 15:9.⁵¹

The *new heart* and the *new Spirit* promised, which would take away *the heart of stone* (v. 26), refers to the spiritual baptism

that God reveals only He can perform. This is why it is stated in the prophecy, *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from also your filthiness and idols.* And *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* Ultimately the baptism of the Holy Spirit was connected to both water in the Old Testament and fire in the New Testament, which we now know was purposed to coincide with the coming Messiah. Yet both of those baptisms, it is declared in Scripture, must originate from God. Thus, all that Ezekiel prophesied of in the Old Testament concerning the cleansing of Israel with water was directly attributed to an act of God, just as Jesus' baptism with fire was performed by God's Son. This same truth as to how to be cleansed by God from sin is still true today. It is seen by the repetition of "I." The word is recurrent and emphatic in each of these verses, revealing that the transformation of the sinner's heart is something that only the Lord can accomplish. It is not something any man can do. It must be an act of God and cannot be accomplished by a mere ceremony, even if it is a traditional ritual and religious observance. Just as John's baptism of water can be traced back to the priests sprinkling the unclean with water, so Jesus said that a spiritual water,

49 Num. 8:7 *And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.*

Num. 19:13 *Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.*

50 Heb. 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Heb. 12:24 *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

51 Gal. 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Gal. 3:14 *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Acts 15:9 *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*

representative of the coming Spirit, is what would allow entrance into the kingdom of God today. To be baptized with water and the Spirit is to be baptized with that spiritual water whose true source is God Himself. This is the Spirit of Christ, Who also like fire will thoroughly cleanse, consume, and destroy all sin in those who have been saved by the Savior.

Because God is Spirit and not a corporeal being consisting of flesh and blood, then all union, fellowship, and intimacy with Him must be on spiritual grounds. Thus,

the *one baptism* spoken of in Ephesians is that spiritual baptism that unites the believer to God and equips him to worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. Heaven is the original of this worship, because the true source of this worship, and that which prompts it, is God's own holy nature. Not only then does Jesus' baptism of the Spirit save a man, but it also equips him to properly worship the heavenly Father *in spirit and in truth*. This is the *one baptism* Ephesians speaks of—and there is no other.⁵²

⁵² *John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

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Endnote

i Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

John 14:16–28 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

¹⁸ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

²⁰ At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

²¹ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

²² Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

²³ Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

²⁴ He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

²⁵ These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

²⁸ Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

John 14:36 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:7–15 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me;

¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

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Chapter 15

Ephesians 4:6–8

Ephesians 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

HERE we now observe the end of the progression that began concerning the *one body* (v. 4¹), then to the subject of *one Lord* (v. 5²), and now *one God and Father of all* (v. 6). The Son of God, Who is Himself the only begotten of God,³ is the source of the church. Consequently we see the verse-by-verse development from the *body* of Christ to the *Lord* Jesus Christ, and now *God and the Father of all*.

One God. Those whom God is the Father of are those who have been begotten through His Spirit.⁴ With God all things are possible.⁵ It took inexplicable power to create the universe, the earth, and man, which together testify of God, and the unfathomable power that lies within Him. This is also true concerning God and His creation and especially true of those saints He has created in Christ Jesus.⁶ These favored, elected individuals can trace their new spiritual existence to God the *Father of all*.⁷ Just as the universe is God's creation, so is that holy, spiritual,

1 Eph. 4:4 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

2 Eph. 4:5 *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

3 John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

I John 4:9 *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

4 Rom. 8:15–16 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

Gal. 4:6–7 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. ⁷Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

5 Matt. 19:26 *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*

Mark 10:27 *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

Luke 1:37 *For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

Jer. 32:17 *Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:*

6 Eph. 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

7 Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

Col. 3:12 *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

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and consecrated body of Christ⁸ formed through God's Son, the Lord's creation. It is also those whom God has created in Christ Jesus⁹ who are by birthright the children of God who can rightfully claim God as their Father—so that not only is God *above* all His creation but is also especially for those He is now *through* and *in*, via His Son's Spirit living within them. These holy, elect, and chosen, the Scripture reveals, have been given the heavenly right to call God, "Abba, Father." *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father* (Rom. 8:15).

This *Spirit of adoption* is that Spirit the Lord imparts to those whom through divine grace He has adopted as His sons. It is also this *Spirit of adoption* Who proves that Christians are members of God's spiritual family and as such have been given legal right to call Him *Father*. The Aramaic word *Abba* is the corresponding term for our English word *Father*. The use of two languages draws added emphasis to the believer's new and spiritual relationship with God.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Rom. 8:15) *Abba, Father*.—"Abba" is the Aramaic equivalent for father. The repetition is

I Pet. 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Rom. 11:17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

8 Rom. 12:4-5 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Eph. 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Col. 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

9 Eph. 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

10 I Cor. 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

11 II Cor. 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Phil. 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

I Cor. 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

one of endearment and entreaty, taken from the natural impulse of children to repeat a beloved name in different forms. Comp. Newton's hymn—

"Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,

My Prophet, Priest, and King..."

God, Who is now our heavenly *Father*, is *above all*, *through all*, and *in all* whom His holy and spiritual nature dwells. It is this *Spirit of adoption* that is planted in the heart of those previously dead in sins, allowing for eternal life after the death of the body. Ultimately it is God's own holy and divine nature that provides for entrance into His heavenly kingdom.¹⁰ This spiritual life, passed on through God's Son, eternally extends a saint's life beyond the death of his physical body. Where God's Spirit dwells there is life because of righteousness,¹¹ even as the body must die because of sin. *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness* (Rom. 8:10).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Rom. 8:10) *The body is dead because of sin*.—Here the word is evidently used of physical death. The doom entailed by sin still, indeed, attaches to the body—but only to the body. The body, indeed, must die, but there the

hold of sin upon the Christian ends; it cannot touch him farther.

(Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:10) *And if Christ be in you*—Namely, by his Spirit dwelling in you: where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ: *the body is dead*—To *μεν σωμα νεκρον*, the body indeed is dead, devoted to death; for our belonging to Christ, or having Christ in us, does not exempt the body from undergoing the sentence of death passed on all mankind; *because of sin*—Heretofore committed; especially the sin of Adam, by which death entered into the world, and the sinful nature derived from him; *but the Spirit is life*—The soul is quickened and made alive to God; and shall, after the death of the body, continue living, active, and happy; *because of righteousness*—Now attained through the second Adam, *the Lord our righteousness*.

Because God's holy and divine nature dwells and is within each and every one of His sons and daughters, then His eternal life now lives within them—so that if people have *Christ in them*,¹² through the presence of the *Spirit of adoption*,¹³ then it is certain that God is their Father, they

are His children, and heaven will soon be their new and permanent home.

Ephesians 4:7 *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

Every true child of God has been favored by God, *according to the measure of the gift of Christ*. Just as salvation is a gift,¹⁴ so is each and every spiritual endowment and/or gift of the Spirit given through grace.¹⁵ These spiritual gifts have been purposed to manifest forth and reveal the presence of God to the world. To Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, the Holy Spirit—with His supernatural capabilities and influence—was given without measure. But to the children of God, brought forth through God's Son, this Spirit has been measured out in varying degrees and power. Hence, to the only begotten of God, the Spirit was not measured in any way, shape, or form, but to those whom He has saved, it is. *For [Christ] whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him* (John 3:34).

12 Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

13 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

14 Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Eph. 2:8–9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Rom. 5:15 *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

15 I Cor. 12:4–11 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁸For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ⁹To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: ¹¹But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

Rom. 12:6–8 *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; ⁷Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; ⁸Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

Eph. 4:11–12 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹²For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

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(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 3:34) *By measure*—Not in a small degree, but fully, completely. The prophets were inspired on particular occasions to deliver special messages. The Messiah was continually filled with the Spirit of God. “The Spirit dwelt in him, not as a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless ocean” (Henry).

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, John 3:34) for God giveth not the Spirit by measure—Here, again, the sharpest conceivable line of distinction is drawn between Christ and all human-inspired teachers: “They have the Spirit in a limited degree; but God giveth not [to Him] the Spirit by measure.” It means the entire fulness of divine life and divine power. The present tense “giveth,” very aptly points out the permanent communication of the Spirit by the Father to the Son, so that a constant flow and reflow of living power is to be understood (Compare Joh 1:15¹⁶) [Olshausen].

To the Son the Spirit of God was not measured out; to the church of Christ the powers of the Spirit are measured. This distribution of spiritual gifts, powers, and abilities is according to divine choice for an individual. This is evidenced in I Corinthians, in which the apostle Paul was teaching the Corinthians about the various—though powerful and influential—ways the Spirit of God would manifest Himself in their lives. Ultimately not all Christians will possess the exact same spiritual gifts and/or spiritual power, but every believer will possess whatever spiritual strengths are necessary for their function in Christ's body. *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to*

another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will (I Cor. 12:7–11). The gifts listed include the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues—yet all these manifestations of the Spirit have but one spiritual source, He Who imparts the Spirit. The *dividing to every man severally as he will* is in reference to Him, Who gives the Spirit—so that both the origin of these spiritual endowments and how they are measured out are according to God in Christ's divine will.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 12:11) *Dividing to every man severally*—Conferring on each one as he pleases. He confers on each one that which he sees to be best, and most wise, and proper.

As he will—As he chooses or as in his view seems best. Dr. Doddridge remarks, that this word does “not so much express arbitrary pleasure, as a determination founded on ‘wise’ counsel.” It implies, however, that he does it as a sovereign; as he sees to be right and best. He distributes these favors as to him seems best adapted to promote the welfare of the whole church and to advance his cause.

All gifts of the Spirit and/or manifestations of Christ's nature are distributed according to divine will. They are measured out according to the Lord's choosing and what He wills for a saved one's life. This is a heavenly choice and cannot be manipulated, influenced, or altered by human will. Just as God through election and divine choice chooses those who have

¹⁶ John 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

been purposed to be His sons,¹⁷ so does He equally select the varying gifts of grace and manifestations of the Spirit that they are purposed to possess and operate.

One of the primary reasons for the gifts of the Spirit in the church is so that through these manifestations of divine power, spiritual edification can be brought forth to the body of Christ. Thus, every heavenly endowment, gift, and/or manifestation of the Spirit is given *to profit withal*, that is, given for the profit and advancement of all the other members in Christ's body. What is seen by this is that spiritual power is purposed not for the glory of the recipient but rather for the spiritual growth, edification, and development of those to whom they have been sent to minister. Through these supernatural gifts of grace the Father is made more fully known and the Son of God is glorified.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Cor. 12:7) *But the manifestation of the Spirit.*—These gifts which flow from one source

are intended to flow towards one object, viz., the benefit of the whole Church. If it were only for a man's own benefit it would cease to be a "manifestation"—it would be sufficient for the person to possess the spirit consciously to himself. But the object of light is to give light to others. The object of the spiritual light is to make manifest to others.

To the Son the Spirit was given without measure;¹⁸ to His people the Spirit is measured out according to divine will.¹⁹ Ultimately through Christ's own fullness, He distributes portions of His spiritual power and supernatural ability to His people. In Him *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, but to those in whom He now dwells,²⁰ this power is measured. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily* (Col. 2:9).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Col. 2:9) *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*—Here almost every word is emphatic. First, "All the fulness of the Godhead"—not a mere emanation from the Supreme Being. Next, "dwells" and remains for

17 John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

I Pet. 1:9–10 *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:*

Rom. 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Jer. 1:5–8 *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. ⁶Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. ⁷But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. ⁸Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

18 John 3:34 *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

19 Rom. 12:6 *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*

I Cor. 12:11 *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

20 John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Exod. 25:8 *And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*

Exod. 29:45 *And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.*

Lev. 26:11 *And I set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.*

Ezek. 37:26 *Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.*

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ever—not descending on Him for a time and leaving Him again. Lastly, “bodily,” *i.e.*, as incarnate in His humanity.

(*Benson Commentary*, Col. 2:9) *For in him dwelleth—Inhabiteth, κατοικει, continually abideth; all the fulness of the Godhead—Believers may be filled with all the fulness of God, Ephesians 3:19²¹; but in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, the most full Godhead, Colossians 1:19²²; bodily—Really, substantially. The very substance of God, if one might so speak, dwells in Christ in the most full sense.*

Jesus healed all who were oppressed of the devil, because in Him dwelt *all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*,²³ yet to His disciples the Lord’s power was measured, as they could heal but some.²⁴ In the Son, God has placed all power and authority;²⁵ in those called through Him the Son imparts a measure of this power.²⁶

These gifts of grace are distributed according to divine will, and no individual can appropriate for himself what he believes he should possess or wishes to possess. In truth, every true Christian should be content with both his position in the body of Christ and the spiritual endowments given to him by grace. As evidenced in His parable of the talents,²⁷ it is not so much what we have been given by God in relationship to spiritual gifts but rather how well we steward and faithfully operate what has been given to us. There is nothing in the Word of God that either implies, infers, or directly states that those saved by the Son of God should share completely in all His powers, gifts, and heavenly authority, nothing that states that adopted children, who were previously strangers and foreigners to God,²⁸ should share in the exact same power and authority as Him Who was with God in the beginning.²⁹ This false doctrine is

21 Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

22 Col. 1:19 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*

23 Matt. 15:29–31 *And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. ³⁰And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them: ³¹Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.*

24 Matt. 17:16 *And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.*

Mark 9:17–18 *And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; ¹⁸And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.*

25 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

26 Luke 9:1 *Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.*

27 Matt. 25:14–20 *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. ¹⁵And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. ¹⁶Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. ¹⁷And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. ¹⁸But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. ²⁰And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.*

28 Eph. 2:19 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

Eph. 2:12 *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

29 John 1:1–3 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

what many preachers, pseudo-prophets, and false teachers regularly teach, but it is not what the Word of God reveals as the truth. Ultimately the Father has never desired to make fully equal to the Son of God those saved by Him. To be accounted as a joint-heir with the Son of God³⁰ is enough; to seek any more heavenly rank and power than this is fleshly lust. To complain, murmur, and grumble about the measure of faith, grace, gifts, and/or blessings given proves that it is not God's Spirit Who is truly leading the critic but rather only his own fleshly and carnal nature, which is far more prone to envy than to love.

The record in the book of Numbers when the Lord took of the Spirit that was upon Moses and distributed a degree of the Spirit's power to the seventy elders is an Old Testament example and/or type of what God has done for those who believe upon Jesus today through imparting to them the Spirit of His Son³¹—so that through the Son of God, God's people are made to share in the Lord's own holy, spiritual, and divine nature, which includes sharing in both a measure and degree of the Lord's supernatural spiritual ability. *And the LORD said unto Moses,*

Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone (Num. 11:16–17).

(Benson Commentary, Num. 11:17) I will come down—By my powerful presence and operation. I will put it on them—That is, I will give the same spirit to them which I have given to thee. The spirit is here put for the gifts of the Spirit, and particularly for the spirit of prophecy, whereby they were enabled, as Moses had been and still was, to discern hidden and future things, and resolve doubtful and difficult cases, which made them fit for government. It is observable that God would not, and therefore men should not, call any persons to any office for which they were not sufficiently qualified.

What the Lord did through Moses in taking the Spirit upon him and distributing the Spirit to the seventy elders, specifically for the purpose of bringing forth inspired prophecy is the same pattern God uses today when He takes the Spirit of His Son

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Mic. 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

John 1:14–15 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Col. 1:15–16 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Heb. 1:2–3 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ³Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

30 Rom. 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

31 Gal. 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

and imparts a measure of His supernatural spiritual ability to those saved by Him. The record in Numbers continues when God does exactly as He said He would do. This event mirrors the day of Pentecost, when after Jesus ascended into heaven He sent the promised Holy Spirit to both rest and remain on the apostles. *And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease* (Num. 11:25).

It is noteworthy that the primary and most powerful way a man may properly witness for the Son of God is through the power of the Spirit given to him. Jesus also said that it would be through this spiritual power, imparted to the apostles through being given the Holy Spirit, that would allow them to be credible witnesses for Him—teaching us that if believers do not truly manifest gifts of the Spirit, they cannot really be effective in bearing proper testimony for His Sender.³² *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth* (Acts 1:8). The Greek word for power is #1411 *dunamis*. HELPS Word-studies states of the word: “(from 1410 /*dýnamai*, ‘able, having ability’)—properly, ‘ability to perform’ (L-N); for the believer, power to achieve by applying the Lord’s inherent abilities. ‘Power through God’s ability’ (1411 /*dýnamis*)

is needed in every scene of life to really grow in sanctification and prepare for heaven (glorification).” *Strong’s Lexicon* reveals the usage of the word: “*Dunamis* primarily denotes power, strength, or ability. It is often used in the New Testament to describe the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the miraculous power evident in Jesus’ ministry.” Jesus revealed that He would not leave those who had believed upon Him either comfortless³³ or powerless. It was the miraculous gifts originating from the Holy Spirit given to the apostles that allowed them to spiritually bear witness to the Son of God and His resurrection from the dead. Without the apostles manifesting forth this power, as Jesus had done in His ministry, there never could be or could have been a continued spiritual witness to Christ’s resurrection. This same truth is true today—that to properly speak for Christ and testify to His resurrected person, there must be a sufficient measure of spiritual power manifested by the speaker. The opposite of this, though, is to naively speak of the Lord Jesus and not manifest any of His spiritual gifts in your life, which ultimately reveals a lack of genuine connection to Him. *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God* (I Cor. 2:4–5). Ultimately it is not the word of man that turns people from their sin toward faith in the Son of God but rather the powerful demonstrations of the Spirit that testify

32 John 14:16–17 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

John 20:21–22 *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

33 John 14:18 *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

of God's presence in a believer's life. The apostle Paul was quite aware of this spiritual reality; consequently, he relied not on cleverness of speech or eloquence of oration but rather on the Spirit of God working both in and through him to openly demonstrate to the world the Lord Jesus' present heavenly power and authority over the world.³⁴ Jesus is the Christ—the powerful gifts of the Spirit given by Him to His followers bore present testimony to this. This same truth applies today as well.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Ps. 68:18) [*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.*] thou hast received gifts for men; the gifts of the Holy Spirit, qualifying men for the ministry of the Gospel, as they are interpreted by the Apostle, Ephesians 4:11;³⁵ these Christ received from his divine Father in human nature, when he ascended up to heaven, in order to give them to men; and which he did in a very extraordinary manner on the day of Pentecost. The Targum and Syriac version render it, "thou hast given gifts to men"; and the Arabic version, "and he gave gifts to men", as the apostle, Ephesians 4:8...

Just as all conquerors gain spoil after military victories and then distribute their acquired riches amongst their followers,

so did Jesus Christ, after His victory over death,³⁶ sin, and the devil,³⁷ likewise impart gifts of divine grace. It is also worth noting that in the history of man there have been none even remotely more victorious than Jesus Christ, the Son of man, the Son of God. He is the greatest victor, conquistador, and conquering hero this world has ever witnessed. It is He Who *led captivity captive*, which includes that which binds men to sin and the death it produces. In reality, all the bondage that men have ever encountered in this life has been conquered and overcome through Him Whom God has raised from the dead. Jesus, as Ephesians clearly reveals, *led captivity captive*. That is, He captivated all and everything that has ever held sinners captive and gives complete and total victory over sin, death, and the devil.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:8) When Christ ascended to heaven, he triumphed over all his foes. It was a complete victory over all the malice of the great enemy of God, and over those who had sought his life. But he did more. He rescued those who were the captives of Satan, and led them in triumph. Man was held by Satan as a prisoner. His chains were around him. Christ rescued the captive prisoner, and designed to make him a part of his triumphal procession into heaven, that thus the victory might be complete—triumphing not only over the great foe himself, but swelling his procession with the attending hosts of those who "had been" the captives of Satan, now rescued and redeemed.

34 Rev. 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

35 Eph. 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

36 1 Cor. 15:55–57 *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*³⁶ *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*³⁷ *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

37 Heb. 2:14 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Col. 2:14–15 *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*¹⁵ *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.**

1 John 3:8 *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

To see Jesus Christ any other way than the world's greatest conqueror is to disfigure His present reality. To think of the Son of God as a victim is not to really know the Savior at all. Moreover, to dwell upon the Savior in His humiliated form reveals a present ignorance to His elevated and supreme position in heaven, which is both above and over all of the Lord's creation.³⁸ Ultimately there has never been a greater, more dynamic and charismatic Spirit-filled leader Who has ever lived, let alone risen from the dead, than Him Who conquered not only the world³⁹ but also sin, death,⁴⁰ and Satan, who once ruled the world.⁴¹ Jesus Christ therefore is considerably greater and vastly more powerful than all who have gone before Him or come after. He is exceedingly greater than Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and King David. He is also enormously more powerful

and conquered more than Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, and Attila the Hun. The comfort that Christians can take from this is that through the most preeminent and unparalleled conqueror in the history of the world, they, His people, have been made more than conquerors through Him.⁴² Because their Savior reigns supreme, those saved by Him will through His supernatural spiritual ability likewise overcome and be victorious, both in this life and the next. Every true Christian, time will reveal, will always be a victorious Christian. Their connection to the One Who has conquered all ensures this, even as the gifts of the Spirit the Son of God imparts to His followers assist in this guaranteed victory. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us* (Rom. 8:37).

38 *Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Rev. 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Phil. 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

39 *John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

40 *I Cor. 15:54–57 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

41 *I John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

42 *Rom. 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 16

Ephesians 4:9–11

Ephesians 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

CHRIST's descension and then ascension into heaven mirror Moses' ascension and descension, but in a contrasting manner. Whereas Moses began his journey at the bottom of the mount, to the top, and then back down again, the Son of God began His descent with coming to the earth, to ascending to heaven, and then in His appointed time, He will return in the full glory and majesty of the Father.¹ Whereas Moses also went up into the mount for

only a brief time and interaction with the Lord,² Jesus came down from heaven after eternally being in God's presence.³ This is also why the Son of God's ministry is so much greater than God's servant Moses' ministry. Though Moses brought a portion of God's Word to man, only God's *only begotten Son*⁴ has been eternally in the intimate and everlasting presence of the Father, and as such, has not only revealed more of God's Word and will to man but also God's person.⁵ Whereas Moses could reveal God's law only to Israel, God's Son, Jesus Christ, has far exceeded this revelation and revealed the Lord's

1 John 16:28 *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

2 Exod. 24:18 *And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.*

3 John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

4 John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

I John 4:9 *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

5 John 1:14–18 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. ¹⁶And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

disposition,⁶ person, and holy character.⁷ Ultimately it could not be one merely born of the flesh who could divulge true sight of God, but only He Who possesses inseparable⁸ and continued relationship with Him.⁹ Through Christ doing so, believers may now honor, cherish, and love the Lord, just as all holy creatures do.¹⁰ As the only begotten of God, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him* (John 1:18).

The Greek word for *bosom* is #2859 *kolpos*. *Strong's Lexicon* reveals the usage of the word as “In the New Testament, ‘*kolpos*’ is used to describe the bosom or chest area, often symbolizing intimacy, closeness, or a place of honor.”

Concerning the historical background of the word, the *Strong's* also states, “In ancient Jewish culture, reclining at a meal was a common practice, and the position of lying close to the host's bosom was one

of honor and intimacy. This cultural practice is reflected in the New Testament, where being in someone's bosom signifies a special relationship or favor.”

Man's inability to see God resides in the great gulf of separation that lies between him and God. This distance of understanding is enough that the world by all its wisdom—its advances in science, technology, mathematics, space, and so on, and any other form of gaining insight into the present universe—still cannot know or could ever come to truly know God, apart from God revealing Himself to man. Without Christ's revelation of the Father, the very best that men can do in trying to search Him out is based upon speculation, imagination, and religious conjecture. Ultimately, without the Son of God revealing God to man, God could never fully be known. This is why those who lack either knowledge of or faith in Jesus Christ actually possess no true perception of God at all. For it is only through the Son that the Father can be accurately seen, known, and believed in.¹¹

6 *1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 16:27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

7 *John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Matt. 19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

8 *John 10:30 I and my Father are one.*

9 *John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

10 *Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Neh. 9:6 Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.*

Rev. 7:11–12 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, ¹²Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

11 *John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

It is worth noting that just as Moses' face shone after briefly being in the presence of God,¹² and some believed this transformation continued throughout His entire ministry,¹³ then what shall be the glorious radiance of the Son of God¹⁴ when Jesus returns from continually being in God's holy celestial presence, and in His appropriate time to judge the world in righteousness?¹⁵ This triumphant return, when Christ descends in the full glory of the Father,¹⁶ will be significantly greater and far more astonishing than even what Jesus' close disciples Peter, James, and John observed of Jesus' glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.¹⁷ What the disciples saw in part the world will observe, see, and behold in full. Peter, James, and John's interaction of seeing the Lord Jesus in His glory also prepared them for their

Christian callings. What can be gathered by this is that to boldly and enthusiastically preach Him Whom God has sent into the world to save man, there must occur first an element of seeing Him in His glorified state—since it is seeing the Lord Jesus as He truly is, glorified, that prompts His messengers to deem as their most important mission and purpose in life to reveal to the world the One they have believed upon. This process of preparing men for ministerial service, through permitting sight of the Lord Jesus in glory, was evidenced early after Jesus' resurrection when He revealed Himself to *above five hundred brethren*.¹⁸ To perceive Christ as He truly is—this the greatest motivator in priming and prompting those called to God through His Son, to heartfully and with energized religious fervor engage

12 *Exod. 34:29–30 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.*³⁰ *And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.*

*Exod. 34:34–35 But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.*³⁵ *And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.*

13 Talmudic Interpretations – Some Rabbinic sources suggest that Moses retained a divine radiance throughout his life. The Talmud (Bava Batra 75a) mentions that Moses had a supernatural glow, possibly referring to this concept.

Midrashic Literature – Midrash Tanchuma and other commentaries often depict Moses as maintaining a supernatural quality, even at death (Deuteronomy 34:7 notes that his vigor was undiminished). Some interpretations extend this to mean his radiance persisted.

14 *Mark 13:26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

Luke 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Matt. 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

15 *Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

16 *Matt. 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Luke 9:26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

17 *Matt. 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*

18 *I Cor. 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*

Matt. 28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

in the work of the great commission.¹⁹ For nothing will spark, ignite, and fuel a spiritual heart more—consequently producing a burning desire to spread the gospel—than clearly seeing the Son of God, as He truly is. Ultimately it is perceiving the Lord Jesus, after He has been raised and ascended to God, that will transform a man from merely performing religious duty, to inspire him for sincere spiritual evangelism. For once the Son of God is truly seen, then those who have received sight of Him will count themselves as spiritually bound to announce, declare, and herald the Lord Jesus' present glorified and authoritative state²⁰ to the world.

It is also through saints beholding the glory of the Lord that they are transformed to reflect God's glory in their own lives. *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* (II Cor. 3:18).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, II Cor. 3:18) We see God mirrored in Christ, who is "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15²¹), and as we gaze, with our face unveiled, on that mirror, a change comes over us.

It is as men behold the *glory of the Lord* that they are both changed and reflect back through their heart and lives the very image of the One they have beheld. What was true of Moses externally, when his face shone after being in God's presence, is similarly true of saints internal-

ly. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* (II Cor. 4:6). Albert Barnes' notes are extensive on this verse, but they aptly reveal the true essence of both the reality and the experience that every true Christian will undergo, through the Spirit of God providing light, to spiritually perceive the glory of God through the person and face of Jesus Christ.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 4:6) *For God, who commanded ...*—The design of this verse seems to be, to give a reason why Paul and his fellow-apostles did not preach themselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, 2 Corinthians 4:5.²² That reason was, that their minds had been so illuminated by that God who had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that they had discerned the glory of the divine perfections shining in and through the Redeemer, and they therefore gave themselves, to the work of making him known among people. The doctrines which they preached they had not derived from people in any form. They had not been elaborated by human reasoning or science, nor had they been imparted by tradition. They had been communicated directly by the source of all light—the true God—who had shined into the hearts that were once benighted by sin. Having been thus illuminated, they had felt themselves bound to go and make known to others the truths which God had imparted to them. ... this verse teaches the fact, that the minds of Christians are illuminated. They are enabled to see things as they are. This fact is often taught in the Scriptures; see 1

19 Matt. 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

20 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Phil. 2:10–2:11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

John 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

21 Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

22 II Cor. 4:5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

John 2:20; 1 Corinthians 2:12–15.²³ They have different views of things from their fellow-men, and different from what they once had. They perceive a beauty in religion which others do not see, and a glory in truth, and in the Saviour, and in the promises of the gospel, which they did not see before they were converted. . . . this verse teaches, that it is the “same God” who enlightens the mind of the Christian that commanded the light at first to shine. He is the source of all light. He formed the light in the natural world; he gives all light and truth on all subjects to the understanding; and he imparts all correct views of truth to the heart. Light is not originated by man; and man on the subject of religion no more creates the light which beams upon his benighted mind than he created the light of the sun when it first shed its beams over the darkened earth. “All truth is from the sempiternal source of light divine;” and it is no more the work of man to enlighten the

mind, and dissipate the darkness from the soul of a benighted sinner, than it was of man to scatter the darkness that brooded over the creation, or than he can now turn the shades of midnight to noonday. All this work lies beyond the proper province of man; and is all to be traced to the agency of God—the great fountain of light.

The means by which supernatural transformation is accomplished is through the *Spirit of the Lord* abiding in the believer’s heart.²⁴ Thus, when someone gains through the presence of the Holy Spirit Christ within him²⁵ and has been born of God,²⁶ then sets his eyes upon the Saviour, first spiritual illumination enters the heart, and then spiritual transformation begins to take place within it. This transformation is accomplished by the power of God’s Spirit so that when men’s eyes

23 *I John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

I Corinthians 2:12–15 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

24 *II Cor. 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

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

Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Rom. 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

26 *John 3:1–7 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ²The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. ³Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Tit. 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

I John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

John 1:12–13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

become unveiled²⁷ and they are able to have true sight of Christ and perceive Him as He presently is, then the *Spirit of the Lord* begins a spiritual change within them, which will ultimately augment and expand throughout their entire physical being. This supernatural process begins internally and then progressively extends itself outward²⁸ so that ultimately what the Spirit of God has accomplished in the heart will become visible to the world throughout the person's life.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, II Cor. 3:18) The change that takes place in us is a spiritual change (see 1 Corinthians 2, and notes on 2 Corinthians 3:6²⁹). It is not affected by formal enactments, which at best can but condemn, but it is the work of a Lord Who works within, Who sends forth the beams of His light that they may transform, not the outer surface, but the heart, that so the man may reflect back undimmed thence the glorious Light that has shined on him. And so the man into whose heart the Light of Christ has entered progresses from one stage of spiritual glory to another, until at last

(Romans 8:29³⁰) he becomes fully conformed to the image of the Son of God.

Ephesians 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

From Christ's descension came Christ's ascension so that He *might fill all things*. Because the Lord descended and then ascended, He now through His own spiritual fullness fills all things. From Christ's heavenly fullness the Holy Spirit is given, gifts of grace are imparted,³¹ and believers are fully redeemed. It is the Lord Jesus' full journey—from heaven to earth to die for sin and be resurrected and ascend to God—that allows for those who believe upon the Savior to be accounted as *complete* in Him. Ultimately it is the journey of Christ and all that He accomplished in coming from heaven, and ascending back to heaven, that spiritually accomplishes for the believer eternal fellowship, union, and peace with God.³²

27 II Cor. 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

28 Matt. 5:14–16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Phil. 2:15 *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

I Thess. 5:5 *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

29 II Cor. 3:6 *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

30 Rom. 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

31 John 7:36–39 *What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? ³⁷In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

Eph. 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

32 Rom. 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:10) *Far above all heavens*—see the notes on Ephesians 1:20–23;³³ compare Hebrews 7:26.³⁴ He is gone above the visible heavens, and has ascended into the highest abodes of bliss; see the notes on 2 Corinthians 12:2.³⁵

That he might fill all things—Margin, “fulfil.” The meaning is, “that he might fill all things by his influence, and direct and overrule all by his wisdom and power.” Doddridge.

It is through Jesus’ descent from heaven, to die on the cross for man’s sin, then to be raised from the dead after the punishment for sin had been fully completed, that is the genesis of the believer’s completeness in Him. *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power* (Col. 2:10).

The Greek word for *complete* is #4137 *pléroó*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word *pléroó*, “From the Greek word πλήρης (*plērēs*) [#4134], meaning ‘full’ or ‘complete.’”

The *Strong's* also describes the usage of the word: “The verb ‘*pléroó*’ primarily conveys the idea of filling something to its full capacity or bringing something to completion. In the New Testament, it is often used to describe the fulfillment of

prophecies, the completion of joy, or the filling of individuals with the Holy Spirit. It can also refer to the fulfillment of the law or commandments, indicating a bringing to full expression or realization.”

HELPS Word-studies defines *pléroó*, “(from *plērēs*, ‘be full,’ see 4130 /*plēthō*)—properly, fill to individual capacity, i.e. to the extent it is ‘meet’ (appropriate).”

From these definitions we observe that through Jesus’ journey, coming from heaven to the earth and then ascending back into heaven, the believer has been made full and complete in all that was lacking and would prevent eternal communion with God. Because of the completeness given to saints through Christ, all shame, disgrace, humiliation, and chagrin for past sin have been removed. Hence, where fallen and sinful man is deficient and incomplete on his own and unworthy of heaven, now through the Son of God and His redemptive ministry Christ’s own fullness makes him complete. Because of this, the sinner’s salvation need not rest on himself, neither upon his own personal works or worth, but rather on the finished work of Him Who has been given the full authority by God to save man.³⁶ For the true saint it is not himself or personal holiness that

33 Eph. 1:20–23 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*

²¹*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;* ²²*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,* ²³*Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

34 Heb. 7:26 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

35 II Cor. 12:2 *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*

36 John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* John 3:17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

II Cor. 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

makes him fit for heaven—but rather the journey of his Savior.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Col. 2:10) *Ye are complete.*—Literally, *ye have been filled up* in His fulness, as in John 1:16.³⁷ So St. Paul had prayed for the Ephesians that they might be “filled with (or rather, *up to*) all the fulness of God,” and “grow into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 3:19; Ephesians 4:13³⁸). To partake of the divine *pleroma* [4138] is not the special privilege of the initiated; it belongs to all who are united to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

Just as Jesus imparted to all believers a measure of various gifts of grace,³⁹ so has He also given as a gift to these same believers divinely placed gift ministries to assist them in growing up in their own personal ministries. Where false teachers and preachers will seek to lead men to themselves,⁴⁰ these heavenly sent ministries will first perfect the saints, preparing them for the work of the ministry. Their purpose and reason for living is for *the perfecting of the saints*, with a view to *the work of the ministry*, with a further view of *the edifying of the body of Christ*, with

the final result of producing greater *unity* in the church and its members arriving at a greater *knowledge of the Son of God*. Though believers have been saved by Christ, there is still much lacking in many of them regarding both their faith and walk. Because of this, spiritual restoration is needed before they can be fully equipped to fulfill their own specific call to Christ. It is thus the purpose of these spiritually gifted ministries to perfect that which is lacking in the saints, preparing them for the work of the ministry and ultimately growing them up to possess both a knowledge of and faith in Christ Himself. These gift ministries are essential for the Christian's growth and development. Through Christ's power working within them, they help restore that which is broken in the saved so that they may carry out Christ's purpose for their own lives. Without these divinely appointed ministries, the body of Christ would be tossed to and fro and carried about with every deceptive and devilish wind of doctrine, purposed to deceive.⁴¹ To foolishly reject these spiritual servants, given to the church by the Son, is to ultimately reject their Sender.⁴² For none can truly reject those sent by the Son of God for the church's advancement and

37 John 1:16 *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

38 Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

Eph. 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

39 Eph. 4:7 *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

40 Acts 20:30 *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

II Cor. 11:13 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*

II Pet. 2:1–2 *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

Matt. 7:15 *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

Matt. 24:11 *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

41 Eph. 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

42 II Chrn. 36:12 *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD.*

growth and not also reject Him Who has placed them in His body. *He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me* (Luke 10:16). This is not to say that all those who merely in word claim relationship with the Son of God and claim to come in Christ's name should immediately and without careful spiritual inspection be accounted as having been sent by Christ. Absolutely not. This is because the world is filled with an abundance of false teachers and pseudo-prophets never appointed by the Lord Jesus.⁴³ For this reason the scripture cautions all believers to *try the spirits*, to spiritually determine if God is truly the source of those who claim to be speaking by it. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world* (I John 4:1). The genuine prophet Jeremiah spoke of spiritual counterfeits in his time, who came in God's name but were not sent by God. *The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?* (Jer. 5:31). Sadly, as this verse reveals, false prophets have abounded through the millenniums, and still today many merely professing believers love to embrace their false, deceptive, and harmful doctrines. Indeed, many who only profess to follow Christ in word regularly gather

to themselves false teachers⁴⁴ in the place of true ministries that Christ has set in His church. As the verse states, *my people love to have it so*. That is, there are many in religion who will embrace false prophets and their false prophecies far above the real truth of God's Word.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Jer. 5:31) My people love to have it ...—The words imply more than an acquiescence in evil, and describe an ethical condition like that of Romans 1:32 [Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.]

Undoubtedly many in various positions of Christian government have gained religious influence and authority, whom Christ has not placed there, much less ordained for ministry. Thus, just because a man labels himself as a prophet or an evangelist does not mean that he is who he claims to be. Moreover, no man also has the right to take such an honor, thinking himself either an *apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher*, through personal will or selfish desire. As with priests in the Old Testament, none could assume through merely human desire the title, honor, and position of a priest. *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron* (Heb. 5:4). To be called to such an office, an

43 Ezek. 13:9 *And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God.*

Jer. 14:14 *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

Jer. 23:16 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.*

Matt. 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

II Tim. 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

44 II Tim. 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

individual must first be divinely called and appointed by God for it, as Aaron was.⁴⁵ Though some will disagree with this principle being applied to ministers today, one only needs to look at the spiritual immaturity and lack of deep biblical instruction in the body of Christ to conclude that divinely sent spiritual leadership is severely lacking. Consequently, if saints are not being perfected in their faith and the work of the ministry is not successfully being undertaken by them and spiritual edification is not being evidenced in Christ's body, then undoubtedly those leading God's people have not themselves been equipped by the Lord Jesus for the positions they hold. Ultimately, all positions in Christ's body must be according to divine will and cannot be entered into merely through human desire. This is why though a person may attend either Bible college or seminary, this itself does not equip him or her for church pastorship. Undoubtedly the appointments of the ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers* are no exception to this rule—so that if a man only needs religious education to claim himself fit to lead God's people, then Christ, and His divine appointments apparently are not even necessary to conduct Christian ministry. In regard to the true ministries in the church, Jesus said,

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you (John 15:16). Jesus' words reveal that not only did He choose the disciples for salvation, but also He even more specifically ordained them for ministry. Ultimately it is solely the Lord Jesus Who chooses and then appoints for ministry those purposed to function as true ministers in His church. This is why if a man does not have spiritual power or heavenly wisdom in his ministry, then you can be certain that he has no divine appointment by Christ, nor will he ever be able, because of his lack of ability to demonstrate the Spirit,⁴⁶ to effectively witness or testify for Christ.⁴⁷

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 15:16) I have chosen you—To be apostles. Yet all whom he now addressed were true disciples. Judas had left them; and when Jesus says he had chosen them to bear fruit, it may mean, also, that he had "chosen them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," 2 Thessalonians 2:13.⁴⁸

Ordained you—Literally, I have placed you, appointed you, set you apart. It does not mean that he had done this by any formal public act of the imposition of hands, as we

45 *Exod. 28:1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.*

Exod. 29:1-8 And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, ²And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. ³And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. ⁴And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. ⁵And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: ⁶And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. ⁷Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. ⁸And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them.

46 *I Cor. 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:*

47 *Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

48 *II Thess. 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

now use the word, but that he had designated or appointed them to this work, Luke 6:13–16; Matthew 10:2–5.⁴⁹

Bring forth fruit—That you should be rich in good works; faithful and successful in spreading my gospel. This was the great business to which they were set apart, and this they faithfully accomplished. It may be added that this is the great end for which Christians are chosen.

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him (I Cor. 12:18). Because it is true that God has set the members in the body, as it hath pleased Him, then it must be equally true that the gift ministries that Christ has ordained to strengthen these members in their spiritual walk must also be according to divine will. To foolishly think, then, that the members of Christ's church and how they are purposed to function in it must be in accordance to divine will—while rejecting the idea that those heavenly sent ministries, ordained by Christ, need not be appointed by Him

for ministry—is spiritual nonsense. For none can truly be effective in any spiritual calling unless he has been divinely equipped for it by the Savior. It is therefore only the Lord Jesus Who has placed true gift ministries in His church, and only He Who imparts the necessary spiritual gifts and abilities that will make them effective in it.⁵⁰

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, I Cor. 12:18) as it hath pleased him] Literally, as He willed. See last note. St Paul would have us draw the inference that our own peculiar disposition and talents are appointed us by God, that we may perform the special work in the world for which we were designed. We are not therefore to repine because we do not possess the qualifications which we see possessed by others, but to endeavour to make the best possible use of the gifts we have.

What is also true is that those sent to labor for the Lord and spiritually reap the harvest of God are to a certain degree, largely rare.⁵¹ *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues,*

⁴⁹ Luke 6:13–16 *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; ¹⁴Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, ¹⁶And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.*

Matt. 10:2–5 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. ⁵These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

50 Luke 9:1–2 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. ²And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

51 I Kgs. 18:21–22 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. ²²Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

I Kgs. 22:6–36 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king. ⁷And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? ⁸And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. ⁹Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah. ¹⁰And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. ¹¹And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. ¹²And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand. ¹³And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold

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and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest (Matthew 9:35–38).

The *harvest* that Jesus spoke of are those souls who, though hungry and desiring greater fellowship with God, were instead spiritually starving and wandering as sheep without a shepherd. Hence, though the quantity of those searching for the truth was great, what was lacking, and of whom existed very few, were those

divinely sent laborers of God to reap His harvest. It is for this specific reason that Jesus instructed the church to *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.* The reason that prayer is important in this matter is that only God can send and equip with spiritual power those who are able to draw people to Him. Ultimately only *the Lord* has the ability to both send and equip for ministry laborers for His harvest. Since the harvest is God's, only those ordained by Him can properly reap it. What was true in Jesus' time is also true today. For though there are many who desire God and seek to know the way of salvation, there remain very few who have been sufficiently spiritually gifted to help them in their journey. Because so many in the professed church are spiritually

now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. ¹⁴And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, but the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak. ¹⁵So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king. ¹⁶And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD? ¹⁷And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. ¹⁸And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? ¹⁹And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. ²⁰And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. ²¹And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. ²²And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. ²³Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee. ²⁴But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? ²⁵And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. ²⁶And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; ²⁷And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. ²⁸And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Harken, O people, every one of you. ²⁹So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. ³⁰And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. ³¹But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. ³²And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. ³³And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. ³⁴And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. ³⁵And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. ³⁶And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

unfit for the offices they hold and lack the spiritual power and ability for their religious positions, a great amount of God's chosen, even today, are left to wander as sheep with no shepherd.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 9:36) But when he saw the multitudes—*That followed him from place to place. When he saw their anxiety to be instructed and saved.

*He was moved with compassion on them—*He pitied them.

*Because they fainted—*The word used here refers to the weariness and fatigue which results from labor and being burdened. He saw the people burdened with the rites of religion and the doctrines of the Pharisees; sinking down under their ignorance and the weight of their traditions; neglected by those who ought to have been enlightened teachers; and scattered and driven out without care and attention.

Apostles. The Greek word for *apostle* is #652 *apostolos*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word, "*apóstolos* (from 649 / *apostéllō*, 'to commission, send forth')—properly, someone sent (commissioned), focusing back on the authority (commissioning) of the sender (note the prefix, *apo*); apostle." To properly be called an *apostle* of Jesus Christ demanded a special commission to go forth and spread the gospel. For the apostle Paul this commission was to the Gentiles⁵² so that they might hear the truth and be saved.

Strong's Lexicon states that the usage of the term *apostolos* "refers to one who is sent

forth with a specific mission or commission. In the New Testament, it primarily denotes the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus Christ, who were sent out to preach the gospel and establish the early Church."

HELPS Word-studies reveals the term to mean, according to the cultural and historical background: "In the Greco-Roman world, the term '*apostolos*' was used to describe a messenger or envoy sent with authority to represent someone else. In the context of the New Testament, apostles were seen as authoritative representatives of Jesus Christ, entrusted with spreading His teachings and establishing His Church. The role of an apostle was foundational in the early Church, as they were responsible for teaching, guiding, and maintaining the doctrinal purity of the Christian faith."

Some of the rarest of Christ's unique gifts to the church are those chief ministries that the Lord Jesus personally ordained as *apostles* for Himself. To accurately be labeled a special messenger of the Lord Jesus, which is what the word *apostle* means, there needed to be personal contact with the Savior. Examples include Paul,⁵³ Jesus' twelve disciples, Judas and Silas, and others.⁵⁴ Ultimately no angel could give legitimacy for such a ministry, nor could any man carelessly assume this title through personal will. Needless to say, no angel can call a man to true religious office, though many false prophets have attributed angels and false visions as the sources of their calling. Examples of this heresy include Joseph Smith, founder

52 Gal. 2:7–8 *But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)*

53 Acts 9:15–16 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. (For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.)*

54 Acts 15:32 *And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.*

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of the Mormon church,⁵⁵ and the angel Moroni,⁵⁶ whom Smith claimed came and spoke to him. Mohammed could also be included, who claimed being visited by the angel Gabriel in a cave.⁵⁷ These are but two examples of very many through the centuries who were false prophets claiming to gain their ordination for ministry through a visitation from an angel. *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind* (Col. 2:18).

We can also say with spiritual confidence that no such ministries as apostles exist today, though we do hold much of their divinely received doctrine in the Canon.⁵⁸ Ultimately apostles were gifted with extraordinary spiritual powers.⁵⁹ This was necessary for their planting the gospel throughout the world, providing credible witness that the Lord Jesus had personally ordained them for ministry. As with the prophets of old, the Lord would not let the apostles' words fall to the ground.⁶⁰ Understandably, there are none who have ever held higher rank in the body of Christ than those directly and per-

55 Bushman, Richard L. "Joseph Smith." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Smith-American-religious-leader-1805-1844.

56 Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Moroni." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., www.britannica.com/topic/Moroni-religious-figure.

57 Montgomery Watt, William, and Nicolai Sinai. "Muhammad." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 25 Feb. 2025, www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad.

58 Gal. 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.* ¹²*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

II Pet. 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

II Tim. 3:16–17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

59 Acts 19:11–12 *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: ¹²So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

Acts 2:1–7 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

⁴*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. ⁶Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. ⁷And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?*

Acts 5:12–16 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. ¹³And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. ¹⁴And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) ¹⁵Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. ¹⁶There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.*

Acts 16: 16–18 *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: ¹⁷The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. ¹⁸And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.*

Acts 28:7–9 *In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. ⁸And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. ⁹So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:*

60 I Sam. 3:19 *And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.*

sonally called by the Son of God for the ministry of an apostle. Since apostles in the early church held the highest rank, as such they were entrusted with the greatest responsibility to testify for the Savior and fulfill the great commission in leading others to be baptized by Him.⁶¹

The next ministry, and perhaps even in spiritual rank and authority, is the ministry of *prophets*. The *Strong's* defines the word #4396 *prophētēs*, “a prophet, poet; a person gifted at expositing divine truth.”

Its word origin of *prophet* according to *Strong's Lexicon* is “derived from the Greek word ‘*pro*’ (before) and ‘*phēmi*’ (to speak), meaning ‘one who speaks forth’ or ‘advocate.’”

Regarding the usage of the word, “In the New Testament, ‘*prophētēs*’ refers to a person who is divinely inspired to communicate God’s will and message to others. Prophets are often seen as God’s spokespersons, delivering messages of warning, guidance, or revelation. They may foretell future events or provide insight into God’s plans and purposes.”

Practically speaking, if the church is exposed to a true prophet of the Lord, then this will easily be evidenced by the accurate, truthful, and spiritually beneficial prophecy which is brought forth.⁶² This prophecy will not only awaken people to the Lord’s presence, but also the revelation brought forth will often lay bare the *secrets* of men’s hearts. This is seen in I Corinthians 14 when we observe what true prophetic utterances will produce, of which God’s prophets are their main source. *But if all prophets, and there come*

in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth (I Cor. 14:24–25). It is also *prophets* and the prophetic messages they bring forth that are most effective at touching and influencing those who *believeth not* and/or are *unlearned*.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 14:25) *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest*—Made manifest to himself in a surprising and remarkable manner. He shall be led to see the “real” designs and motives of his heart. His conscience would be awakened; he would recall his former course of life; he would see that it was evil; and the present state of his heart would be made known to himself. It is possible that he would suppose that the speaker was aiming directly at him, and “revealing” his feelings to others; for such an effect is often produced. The convicted sinner often supposes that the preacher particularly intends “him,” and wonders that he has such an acquaintance with his feelings and his life; and often supposes that he is designing to disclose his feelings to the congregation. It is possible that Paul here may mean that the prophets, by inspiration, would be able to reveal some secret facts in regard to the stranger; or to state the ill design which he might have had in coming into the assembly; or to state some things in regard to him which could be known only to himself; as was the case with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1,⁶³ seq.)...

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, I Cor. 14:25) *and so falling down on his face*: either publicly before the whole congregation; or when retired, as one ashamed of his sins and errors, and not able to look either God, or good men, in the face; and being in an adoration posture; or however, being truly

61 Matt. 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

62 I Cor. 12:7 *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

63 Acts 5:1 *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,*

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humbled before God under a sense of his iniquities,

he will worship God; pray unto him, and earnestly entreat he would be merciful to him a sinner, and blot out all his transgressions, and forgive him all his sins; and will ever after acknowledge him to be the true God, embrace his Gospel, submit to his ordinances, and attend his service:

and report: or “declare,” freely and openly to the church, to all men, to the world, and to his company from whence he came, and to whom he belonged,

that God is in you of a truth: that the Spirit of God, who is truly God, and searches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and the deep things of men, and makes them manifest, is in the prophets and preachers, otherwise they would never be able to make manifest the secrets of the heart as they do; and that the presence of God is in the church, and the power of God goes along with the ministration of the word: hereby, now many valuable ends are answered, a sinner is converted, God is worshipped and glorified, credit is brought to religion, the church of Christ is spoken well of, and prophets or preachers are honoured.

What is seen here is the direct correlation to bringing the unsaved and/or unbelieving man to recognize God and be humbled in His presence, which includes either the ministry of a prophet or the special gift of prophecy. Generally speaking it takes the ministry of a prophet to open the eyes of those spiritually blind to both God and their own sinful state. Fear, reverence, and respect for the Lord are good things, and none are more suitable to producing this in the unsaved and those ignorant of God than those called to speak for God. This is also why though other ministries can be highly effective in ministering to the saved, it will often take the gift ministry of a prophet to reach those deep in sin and far away from God. Outside of the gift ministry of an *apostle*, there is no greater ministry purposed to bring people back to the Lord than those *prophets* sent by Him.⁶⁴ To therefore discover the will of God, especially in areas where scripture is silent or not known, the prophet's ministry is indispensable. *Beforettime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer* (I Sam. 9:9). There are many more scriptures that speak of the Lord's prophets.⁶⁵

64 II Chrn. 24:19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

Jer. 3:22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

Isa. 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

65 Heb. 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, II Kgs. 21:10 And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

Num. 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Deut. 34:10–11 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,¹¹ In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,

I Sam. 3:19–20 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

²⁰ And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. I Kigs. 16:12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet.

Evangelists. The Greek word for *evangelist* is #2099 *euaggelistés*. *Strongs' Lexicon* reveals the word origin as “Derived from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (*euaggelion*), meaning ‘good news’ or ‘gospel.’”

As to the usage of the word—“The term ‘*euaggelisté*’ refers to a proclaimer of the gospel, one who announces the good news of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, an evangelist is someone who is specifically gifted and called to spread the message of salvation through Christ. This role is distinct from that of apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, though it shares the common goal of edifying the body of Christ and expanding the Kingdom of God.”

In regard to the cultural and historical background of the word, the *Strong's* states, “In the early Christian church, evangelists played a crucial role in the spread of Christianity beyond the Jewish communities into the Gentile world. The term reflects the itinerant nature of their ministry, as they traveled to various regions to preach the gospel. The role of an evangelist was vital in the context of the Roman Empire, where diverse cultures and languages presented both challenges

and opportunities for the dissemination of Christian teachings.”

HELPS Word-studies defines *euaggelion* as “properly, an ‘evangelist’ (L & N, 1, 53.76); someone with a vocational calling from God to announce the good news of the Gospel.” One of the few evangelists listed in Scripture is *Philip the evangelist*. *And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him* (Acts 21:8).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Acts 21:8) *The evangelist*—This word properly means one who announces good news. In the New Testament it is applied to a preacher of the gospel, or one who declares the glad tidings of salvation. It occurs only in two other places, Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5.⁶⁶ What was the precise rank of those who bore this title in the early Christian church cannot perhaps be determined. It is evident, however, that it is used to denote the office of preaching the gospel; and as this title is applied to Philip, and not to any other of the seven deacons, it would seem probable that he had been entrusted with a special commission to preach, and that preaching did not pertain to him as a deacon, and does not properly belong to that office. The business of a deacon was to take care of the poor members of the church,

II Kgs. 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Jer. 7:25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:

Jer. 29:19 Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord.

Jer. 25:4 And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

Isa. 38:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

Jer. 46:13 The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt.

II Chrn. 24:19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 66 *Eph. 4:11* And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

II Tim. 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

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Acts 6:1–6.⁶⁷ The office of preaching was distinct from this, though, as in this case, it might be conferred on the same individual.

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Acts 21:8) *evangelists*] The word occurs thrice in N.T.; here, Acts 21:8, and 2 Timothy 4:5. It seems, like our word “missionary,” to indicate not a defined ecclesiastical order (for Timothy “does the work of an evangelist,” while also an authoritative superintendent of pastors and churches), but rather a special kind of personal function in the ministry; the work of one called and devoted to direct proclamation of the Gospel message. It was thus an elastic word, like “missionary,” sometimes and oftenest denoting a minister’s special function, sometimes one only of his functions. “This passage,” our present passage, “would lead us to think of the evangelists as standing between the two groups;” (apostles and prophets, pastors and teachers,) “sent forth, as missionary preachers of the Gospel, by the first, and as such preparing the way for the labours of the second” (Smith’s *Dict. of the Bible*, under the word *Evangelist*).

There is little more that we can add to the word beyond the sources we have cited. Its limited use in the Scripture cannot help us to gain any deeper meaning. But it is worthy to note that the word *evangelists* is directly tied to the gospel of Jesus Christ and its good news. This is undoubtedly why the Greek word has no Hebrew equivalent. Because Jesus brought forth a new covenant for man⁶⁸ and completely new revelation from God on a need for a Savior, then naturally the good news of the gospel could not be revealed until Christ’s physical appearance on the earth. Thus, the ministry of an *evangelist* seems to be that of proclaiming the message of the Savior and His redemptive accomplishments to the world. A recent well-known example of an evangelist is the Reverend Billy Graham, whereby through his lengthy travels he boldly proclaimed the path to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.⁶⁹ In this sense we can see the very unique and important position that evangelists maintained in the early church, when knowledge of the Savior in the world was in its infancy. *Evangelists*

67 Acts 6:1–6 *And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

68 Matt. 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Heb. 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*

Heb. 8:6 *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

Heb. 12:24 *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

69 Rom. 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Rom. 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Tit. 3:5–7 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

are also unique in their role of spreading the gospel in that unlike the ministry of *apostles*, they did not seem to have to be personally commissioned by Christ. And though an evangelist may differ from an apostle in this respect, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without physical sight, can be as equally transformative to a man's heart as seeing the Lord Jesus Christ in person. In fact, just as there would have been a tremendous blessing and spiritual privilege to physically observe the Lord Jesus in His glorified state, it is equally true that having faith in the Son of God without seeing Him in person also holds hope of being blessed. *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed* (John 20:29).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 20:29) That have not seen . . .—Those who should be convinced by the testimony of the apostles, and by the influences of the Spirit. They would evince stronger faith. All faith is of things not seen; and God blesses those most who most implicitly rely on his word.

To have physically seen the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection must have been an astonishing sight.⁷⁰ Yet to have not actually had sight of the Lord Jesus in His resurrected body and still believe could be viewed as even more an act of faith. For this reason saints today should

not bemoan their personally not seeing Jesus raised, simply because all genuine and sincere faith in the Savior will yield exactly the same result, as if He has been personally seen and believed upon. *Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you* (Matt. 9:29).

Pastors and teachers. Once churches were established in the early first century, it was necessary to establish some form of spiritual leadership, and/or Christian authority. New members had been birthed into the body of Christ, and as such, these new converts needed both shepherded and instructed in the way of God's will for their lives. It is here that *pastors* and *teachers* assume their primary role, which is to care for and instruct believers in the gospel message. Some commentaries link *pastors* and *teachers* together as one ministry, while others separate them, but one thing is certain—the primary role of both ministries is to care for those saved by Christ. In regard to the offices of *apostles*, *prophets*, and *evangelists*, Benson states that their offices were “extraordinary.” “All these [*apostles*, *prophets*, and *evangelists*] were extraordinary officers: the ordinary were some, pastors (called *ἐπισκοποις*, *bishops*, Acts 20:28⁷¹) watching over and feeding their several flocks. . . *And teachers*—Whether of the same or a lower order, to assist them as occasion might require. It is probable the peculiar

70 Luke 24:36–39 *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.* ³⁷*But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.* ³⁸*And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?* ³⁹*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* Matt. 28:8–9 *And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.* ⁹*And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.*

Acts 9:3–7 *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:* ⁴*And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* ⁵*And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* ⁶*And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* ⁷*And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.*

71 Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

office of those here termed teachers, as distinguished from those called pastors, was to instruct the young and ignorant in the first principles of the Christian religion.”⁷²

Pastors is #4166 *poimén*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word as “a shepherd; hence met: of the feeder, protector, and ruler of a flock of men. . . . H7463—רֹעֵה (ro'eh): Shepherd, herdsman.”

The *Strong's* states of the usage of the word, “*poimén*’ primarily refers to a shepherd, one who tends, leads, and cares for a flock of sheep. In the New Testament, it is used both literally and metaphorically. Literally, it describes those who care for sheep, while metaphorically, it refers to leaders or pastors who guide and nurture a community of believers, akin to a shepherd with his flock.”

Concerning the cultural and historical background of the word—“In ancient Near Eastern cultures, shepherds held a vital role in society, responsible for the welfare and guidance of sheep, which were crucial for economic and subsistence purposes. The image of a shepherd was deeply embedded in the cultural and religious consciousness of the Israelites, often symbolizing leadership, provision, and protection. This imagery is prevalent

throughout the Bible, where God is depicted as the ultimate Shepherd of His people, and leaders are often called to emulate this role.”

HELPS Word-studies defines #4166 *poimén* as “properly, a shepherd (‘pastor’ in Latin); (figuratively) someone who the Lord raises up to care for the total well-being of His flock (the people of the Lord). [4166 (*poimén*) is closely associated with 1066 /*Gedeón* (‘to feed the flock’), see Jn 21:15–17.”⁷³”

The ministry of a pastor is that of primarily caring for the safety and well-being of God’s people. There is no doubt that there are a great many more pastors in the church, as we know them to be today, than apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers. Practically, shepherding the Lord’s people requires a different spiritually inspired ministry than exercising strong spiritual religious authority in the church.⁷⁴ An example of this is that you will rarely see those called to shepherd the flock, pen a letter like the apostle Paul’s letter to the Corinthians and/or Galatians, which contained strong reproof and correction for their continued walk in the flesh,⁷⁵ and ultimate lack of any deep spiritual understanding.⁷⁶ Neither would those primarily called to shepherd the flock (those who have already believed

72 *Benson Commentary*

73 *John 21:15–17* So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. ¹⁶He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. ¹⁷He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

74 *II Tim. 4:2* Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

75 *I Cor. 3:1–3* And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. ²I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. ³For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

I Cor. 4:21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

76 *I Cor. 6:5* I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

in the Savior through making Him Lord of their life)⁷⁷ speak as Isaiah and Jeremiah did in regard to Israel and their sin.⁷⁸ Perhaps a current-day comparison of the separation of these gift ministries can be observed in today's medical field, in which one doctor's specialty is surgery, whose sharp scalpel must be used to assist patients with their internal broken bones, diseases, and cancerous tumors, while another doctor's main responsibility—like that of a family practitioner—is diagnosing illness, continuing checkups and administering immunizations, which carries a completely different mindset for their particular function. Ultimately every gift ministry has its role, regardless of its function, and each ministry should seek to strive to fulfill its own divine calling. *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise* (II Cor. 10:12).

Teachers. In practice, all the gift ministries need an element of teaching ability,⁷⁹ though the gift ministry of a *teacher* can easily be discerned through his spiritual

ability to reveal deeper truths contained in the Word of God. So much of the biblical truth available today is because of the successive ministries of men with the gift ministry of teaching, who have illuminated the Scriptures throughout the centuries. There is much to know of God's Word, and no individual minister, regardless of his skill, could teach all that is necessary to fully understand God and His will for man. For this reason, teaching ministries have successively built upon one another and filled in the gaps of what previous ministries either could not see or lacked sufficient time to reveal. Much like the ministries of the prophets, where it is stated, *Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge* (I Cor. 14:29), so should *teachers* show the same deference to other divinely sent ministers revealing what they have come to know of the truth. It is also worth noting that those involved in true ministries rarely have conflict among themselves, as each is spiritually mature and cares enough for the body of Christ to be aware of the great importance and necessity of Christ's other inspired ministries and their divine purpose in the gospel. For true ministers, spiritual unity is as essential in the body

I Cor. 3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

77 Rom. 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

78 Isa. 1:20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Isa. 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: ²But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Isa. 22:14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Isa. 30:12-13 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: ¹³Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

Jer. 11:11 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

Jer. 5:14-15 Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. ¹⁵Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.

79 I Tim. 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

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of Christ as any other gift ministry operating within it.⁸⁰ It is surely not those truly sent by Christ who incite division and schism within God's people⁸¹ but rather those carnal and often even unsaved individuals who have been masquerading as Christians, whose main aim is spiritual disruption.⁸² The reason that Christ has given these various gifts to the church is that no individual on his own could accomplish raising up God's people in the faith without other divinely appointed ministries' helping in the work. In reality, no one man regardless of his divine appointment and the strength of his indi-

vidual ministry could successfully supply all the needs of the Lord's people. This is why all solely individual ministries should be questioned as to having their source in God, simply because no one man, has ever been purposed by God to have a religion formed around him. This is especially true if people believe that any one man is the source for all truth since the Lord did not place simply one gift ministry in the church to be built upon but rather a collective body of ministries, like the twelve apostles and similar ministries coming after them.

80 *Eph. 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

81 *Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.*

82 *II Cor. 11:13–15 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.* ¹⁴*And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.* ¹⁵*Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

Matt. 7:15–16 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*

Gal. 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Isa. 29:13 Wherefore the LORD said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

I John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

Tit. 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

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Chapter 17

Ephesians 4:12–13

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Perfecting of the saints. Here we see the beginning of the Lord's reason for both ordaining and equipping certain individuals for ministry. It is so that those in the body of Christ may be raised up to share in the work of the ministry and edification of the entire body of Christ.

The Greek word for *perfecting* is #2677 *katartismos*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word as "a bringing to a condition of fitness, perfecting."

The word origin is "derived from the Greek verb *καταρτιζω (katartizō)*, meaning 'to complete, prepare, or equip.'"

The usage of the word is defined by *Strong's*: "The term '*katartismos*' refers to the process of making something complete or fully equipped. In the New Testament, it is often used in the context of spiritual growth and maturity, particularly in the equipping of believers for service and ministry within the body of Christ. It implies a sense of preparation and readiness for a specific purpose or task."

The cultural and historical background of the word is linked: "In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of '*katartismos*'

would have been understood in various contexts, such as the preparation of soldiers for battle or the mending of fishing nets. The idea of equipping or perfecting was integral to many aspects of daily life, emphasizing readiness and functionality. In the early Christian church, this concept was applied to the spiritual development and preparation of believers to fulfill their roles within the community of faith."

HELPS Word-studies defines *katartismos* as "(a masculine noun)—properly, exact adjustment which describes how (enables) the individual parts to work together in correct order (used only in Eph 4:12)."

You can liken young Christians to raw recruits in the military. For though they possess certain potential, there remains a need for extensive training before they become ready for the missions purposed for them. Ultimately the higher position an individual is called to, the more training by qualified leadership is needed over him. Young Christians, though possessing a zeal for God, still lack a degree of spiritual instruction to be fully useful for the Lord and gospel outreach. And though spiritual desire is a good thing to possess, for those filled with religious zeal it can, without sufficient knowledge of God,¹ easily turn to pride. And pride, if left unchecked, uncorrected, and unaddressed, can just as easily result in falling

1 *Rom. 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

into the same condemnation as the devil. *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil* (I Tim. 3:6).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Tim. 3:6) *Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*—The Greek word rendered here “being lifted up,” would be more happily Englished by *being clouded or deluded*. It marks the pride or vanity engendered by the finding himself in a position of authority for which no previous training and experience had fitted him. Such a “novice” would be in imminent danger of falling into the judgment passed by God upon the devil, whose fall was owing to the same blinding effect of pride.

It is for this reason of misguided zeal, youthful pride, and a limited knowledge of the truth that the divinely sent ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors*, and *teachers* have been ordained and spiritually equipped, to restore and repair that which is lacking in God's people. It is also consistent in those who were previously unsaved. Before their salvation occurred, they regularly pursued a path of going their own way. If left ungoverned and uninstructed in the truth, new converts can be tempted to continue in their previous habit of spiritual wandering. The genesis of all sin is departing from God's way to pursue a selfish life of going about one's own way. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all* (Isa. 53:6).

(*Benson Commentary*, Isa. 53:6) *All we*—All mankind; *like sheep*—Which are exceedingly apt to go astray, and lose themselves; *have gone astray*—From God, and from the way of truth and duty; of wisdom, piety, and virtue; of holiness and happiness. *We have turned every one to his own way*—In general, to the way of sin, which may well be called a man's *own way*, because sin is natural to us,

inherent in us, born with us; and, in particular, to those several paths which several men choose, according to their different opinions and circumstances. *And the Lord hath laid*—Hebrew, *hath made to meet on him*, as all the rivers meet in the sea. *The iniquity of us all*—

For the work of the ministry. The Greek word for *work* is #2041 *ergon*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word, “Work, deed, action, task, labor.”

Strong's reveals the usage of the word: “The Greek word ‘*ergon*’ is commonly used in the New Testament to denote work, deed, or action. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from physical labor to moral actions and spiritual deeds. The term is often used to describe the works of God, the deeds of individuals, and the actions that demonstrate faith. In a theological context, ‘*ergon*’ can refer to both good works, which are the fruit of faith, and works of the law, which cannot justify a person before God.”

The cultural and historical background of the word is explained: “In the Greco-Roman world, work was a significant aspect of daily life, with a clear distinction between manual labor and intellectual pursuits. The concept of ‘*ergon*’ was integral to both Jewish and Greek thought, where it was associated with fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities. In Jewish tradition, good works were seen as expressions of obedience to God's commandments. In the early Christian context, ‘*ergon*’ took on a deeper spiritual meaning, emphasizing the importance of faith manifested through actions.”

HELPS Word-studies defines #2041 as “*érgon* (from *ergō*, ‘to work, accomplish’)—a work or worker who accomplishes something. 2041 /*érgon* (‘work’) is a deed (action) that carries out (completes) an inner desire (intension, purpose).” For anything

to be accomplished there must be those both willing and able to sacrifice elements of their lives to accomplish it. Hence, not only are divinely sent ministries called to do their own work, but they are also purposed to raise up the saved so that they will become spiritually mature enough to do theirs.

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Eph. 4:12) The Divine gift of a Christian Ministry is to have its effect above all things in the fitting of “the saints” (true believers in general) for active “service” for the common Lord.

It is only as believers are perfected in that which is lacking in their faith that their individual callings can be fully entered into. Because God has set the members in the body as it has pleased Him,² there is an essential need of every member to contribute to the edification and spiritual growth of the body—so that as each individual Christian progresses in his own spiritual development, then the final result will be a collective assembly, being united, edified, and growing in a deeper faith in the Son of God.

Work of the ministry. For the work of the ministry to advance, there must arise in those called by God through Christ a spiritual willingness to become living sacrifices for Him. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service* (Rom. 12:1). Ultimately for the work of the ministry to be accomplished, there must arise in believers a willingness to give their lives as living sacrifices to God. This is in direct contrast

to how those now saved previously both lived in and served sin, so that whereas once God’s people used their bodies to satisfy the sin nature within themselves, now, after divine mercy has been given to them,³ they are instructed to dedicate these same bodies and lives to be employed for the Lord and His work. The use of the word *bodies* in this verse connotes the entirety of a believer’s being. That is, all Christians are to yield all and everything they are to God, then to be used in service for Him.

(Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 12:1) The idea contained in sacrifice is that of dedication. We are to dedicate our bodies to God. But there is to be this distinction between the old Jewish sacrifices and the Christian sacrifice: the one was of dead animals, the other of the living man. The worshipper must offer, or present, before God, himself, with all his living energies and powers directed consciously to God’s service.

Just as Jesus gave His bodily life to save the sinner, which actually included His physical body’s death, it is reasonable that believers now should be willing to yield their completely new spiritual lives⁴ to God. Undoubtedly doing this requires a denial of their previous selves. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me* (Matt. 16:24). To do any work there must be a degree of sacrifice; to do the work of God demands Christians denying themselves for God’s work.

(Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 16:24) If any man will come after me.— The “will” is more than a mere auxiliary; “willeth,” “desireth” to come after.

² *I Cor. 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

³ *Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

⁴ *I Thess. 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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Let him deny himself, and take up his cross.—Our common thoughts of “self-denial,” i.e., the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. If he does not so deny himself, he is in danger, as Peter was (it is significant that the same word is used in both instances), of denying his Lord. The self-denial here commanded has, accordingly, its highest type and pattern in the act by which the Son of God, in becoming man, “emptied Himself (see Note on Philippians 2:7⁵) of all that constituted, if we may so speak, the “self” of His divine nature. The words “take up his cross,” which the disciples had heard before (see Note on Matthew 10:38⁶), were now clothed with a new and more distinct meaning, by the words that spoke so clearly of the death of which the cross was to be the instrument.

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Matt. 16:24) Let him, deny himself—That is, let him surrender to God his will, his affections, his body, and his soul. Let him not seek his own happiness as the supreme object, but be willing to renounce all, and lay down his life also, if required.

In the end every man will either deny himself for Christ or deny Christ for himself. He cannot do both.⁷ The Bible clearly reveals that all profession of faith without acts of obedience is dead. *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also* (Jas. 2:26).

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Jas. 2:26) So faith without works is dead also—There is as much necessity that faith and works should be united to constitute true religion, as there is that the body and soul should be united to constitute a living man. If good works do not follow, it is clear that there is no true and proper faith; none that justifies and saves. If faith produces no fruit of good living, that fact proves that it is dead, that it has no power, and that it is of no value. This shows that James was not arguing against real and genuine faith, nor against its importance in justification, but against the supposition that mere faith was all that was necessary to save a man, whether it was accompanied by good works or not. He maintains that if there is genuine faith it will always be accompanied by good works, and that it is only that faith which can justify and save. If it leads to no practical holiness of life, it is like the body without the soul, and is of no value whatever. James and Paul both agree in the necessity of true faith in order to salvation; they both agree that the tendency of true faith is to produce a holy life; they both agree that where there is not a holy life there is no true religion, and that a man cannot be saved. We may learn, then, from the whole doctrine of the New Testament on the subject, that unless we believe in the Lord Jesus we cannot be justified before God; and that unless our faith is of that kind which will produce holy living, it has no more of the characteristics of true religion than a dead body has of a living man.

Just as Abraham is considered the father of all who believe,⁸ after being spoken to by God, he obeyed and went out in search of the land that the Lord was calling him

⁵ Phil. 2:7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁶ Matt. 10:38 *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

⁷ Matt. 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

⁸ Rom. 4:16 *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,*

Gal. 3:6–9 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

to.⁹ This same act of spiritual obedience should be evidenced in all who profess faith in Christ today. Abraham's initial obedience to obey God's will in his life is recorded in Genesis 12:1-9. A study of the record reveals that Abraham's walk included many acts of obedience, proving his faith as sincere and authentic. By this it is seen that where true faith exists, corresponding acts of obedience will follow it. It is this obedience to God and His Spirit that is critical for the work of the ministry to be both begun and continued in, which will ultimately fulfill the Great Commission.¹⁰

Genesis 12:1-9 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

*⁴So Abram **departed**, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

*⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they **went forth** to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

⁹ Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Gen. 12:1-4 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: ²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ⁴So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Gen. 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

¹⁰ Matt. 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

⁶And Abram **passed through** the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

⁷And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, *Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there **builDED** he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.*

⁸And he **removed** from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and **pitchED** his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he **builDED** an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

⁹And Abram **journeyED**, going on still toward the south.

Through Abraham's faith and obedience we can see the great contrast with those who possess what God's Word reveals as *dead faith*. Those who possess this counterfeit faith claim to believe but do little to nothing to obey God. Thus, for any person to possess a faith that saves, like Abraham's, there must be a continuance of obeying God's will throughout the person's life. *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone* (Jas. 2:17).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 2:17) That in fact faith is of no more value, and has no more evidence of genuineness when it is unaccompanied with good works, than such empty wishes for the welfare of the poor would be when unaccompanied with the means of relieving their wants. Faith is designed to lead to good works. It is intended to produce a holy life; a life of activity in

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the service of the Saviour. This is its very essence; it is what it always produces when it is genuine. Religion is not designed to be a cold abstraction; it is to be a living and vivifying principle.

Another verse of Scripture that highlights that all those with sincere, genuine, and true faith will obey God's will is Psalm 37:23—*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 37:23) *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*—Margin, “established.” The word rendered “ordered” means to stand erect; to set up; to found; to adjust, fit, direct. The idea here is, that all which pertains to the journey of a good man through life is directed, ordered, fitted, or arranged by the Lord. That is, his course of life is under the divine guidance and control. The word “good” has been supplied here by our translators, and there is nothing corresponding to it in the original. It is simply there, “the steps of man are ordered,” etc. Yet there can be no doubt that a good or pious man is particularly referred to, for the connection demands this interpretation. The word “steps” here means his course of life; the way in which he goes.

And he delighteth in his way—In his course of life; and, therefore, he blesses him. The general idea is that he is the object of the divine favor, and is under the care of God.

Understandably, for the *work of the ministry* to be truly accomplished, all of God's people must have their *steps*, lives, and reason for living *ordered by the Lord*. It is only as the Christian's life is ordered and arranged by the Lord that true ministerial success becomes possible and proves itself as of God.

Edifying of the body of Christ. The Greek word *edifying* is #3619 *oikodomé*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word as “building, edification, structure.”

The word's origin is “from the Greek verb *οικοδομῶ (oikodomeō)*, meaning ‘to build’ or ‘to construct.’” The usage of the word is described here: “The term ‘*oikodomé*’ primarily refers to the act of building or constructing a physical structure. In the New Testament, it is often used metaphorically to describe the spiritual edification or building up of the church and individual believers. It emphasizes growth, strengthening, and development in faith and character.”

The cultural and historical background of the word is revealed in the following explanation: “In the ancient Greco-Roman world, construction and architecture were significant aspects of daily life, with buildings serving as places of worship, commerce, and community gathering. The metaphor of *building* was a powerful image for early Christians, who saw the church as a spiritual house being built by God. This imagery would have resonated with a culture familiar with the importance of strong foundations and well-constructed edifices.”

HELPS Word-studies defines *oikodomé* as “properly, a building (edifice) serving as a home; (figuratively) constructive criticism and instruction that builds a person up to be the suitable dwelling place of God, i.e. where the Lord is ‘at home.’”

From these definitions of the word it can be seen that the purpose of all work is to build something, and this “something” for those saved is the edification of the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith. A more appropriate translation is, as Ellicott states, “*Till we all come.*—The marginal rendering is correct: *till we all arrive at the unity of the faith.*”¹¹ The unity spoken of consists of two things: 1. An agreement, and/or unity, in the faith of Jesus Christ, and/or that gospel message revealed by Him. 2. An agreement, and/or unity, amongst the various members of those who have been saved by Christ and placed in His celestial body. Hence whereas false prophets will seek division as their mode of operation,¹² the Lord’s true servants will seek to spiritually inspire, encourage, and promote unity among God’s people—so that in both Christian faith and Christians’ fellowship, the Lord’s people become unified, just as all believers have been united and made to share in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.¹³ Between the Father and the Son there exists a divine and eternal oneness.¹⁴ This oneness has also been transferred to those chosen by God¹⁵ to become members of His Son’s body. That which personally connects and produces unity among God’s people is their being made to share in the same gift of the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ.¹⁶

The Greek word for *unity* is #1775 *henotes*. *Strong’s Lexicon* defines the word, “oneness, unity, unanimity.”

The usage of the word is described as follows—“The term ‘*henotes*’ refers to the concept of unity or oneness. In the New Testament, it is used to describe the spiritual unity among believers, emphasizing the harmonious relationship that should exist within the body of Christ. This unity is not merely an external agreement but a profound spiritual connection rooted in shared faith and purpose.”

The cultural and historical background of the word is addressed here: “In the Greco-Roman world, unity was often associated with political or social harmony. However, in the Christian context, unity transcends these temporal associations and is deeply rooted in the spiritual realm. The early church faced numerous challenges, including cultural, ethnic, and doctrinal differences. The call for unity was a call to rise above these differences and to be united in Christ, reflecting the oneness of the Godhead.”

HELPS Word-studies defines #1775 *henotes* as “(from *heis*, ‘one’)—oneness (unity), especially the God-produced unity (oneness) between believers—i.e. the harmony from sharing likeness of nature with the Lord (used only in Eph 4:3, 13).”

And of the knowledge of the Son of God. Ultimately the more accurate a knowledge there is of the *Son of God*, the more

11 Ellicott’s *Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 4:13

12 Acts 20:30 *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

13 Rom. 6:3-5 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

Col. 2:10-13 *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: ¹¹In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹²Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. ¹³And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

14 John 10:30 *I and my Father are one.*

15 Eph. 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

16 Eph. 4:3 *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

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substantial unity that those saved by Him will share, teaching us that the process for building increased spiritual harmony in the body of Christ will be accomplished through a fuller knowledge of the Son of God being imparted. Understandably, in Christian ministry there is no greater work to be engaged in than that labor exerted to bring those saved into a more perfect knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will not only include merely a study of the gospels and Jesus' earthly life but must also include knowledge of the Son of God's present glorified position in heaven.¹⁷ It is this largely forgotten and/or never known heavenly knowledge of the Savior that is most effective in inspiring genuine gospel outreach. First Peter provides a summation of such a knowledge of the Lord Jesus as this: *Who [Jesus] is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him* (I Pet. 3:22). Other translations of this verse provide additional emphasis detailing Jesus' exalted position.

(New Living Translation) Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

(Amplified Bible) who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God [that is, the place of honor and authority], with [all] angels and authorities and powers made subservient to Him.

(New American Standard Bible) who is at the right hand of God, having gone into

heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

(Contemporary English Version) Christ is now in heaven, where he sits at the right side of God. All angels, authorities, and powers are under his control.

(GOD'S WORD® Translation) Christ has gone to heaven where he has the highest position that God gives. Angels, rulers, and powers have been placed under his authority.

From this verse it is evident that it is not simply Jesus' earthly ministry that saints are to be instructed in and therefore brought to a more full knowledge of, but also the knowledge of Christ's present glorified position in heaven. Though many have been exposed to our Lord's earthly ministry, the great realization of His present heavenly ministry is not truly known, including many currently saved by Him. It is thus for this grand purpose of bringing God's people into a greater faith in and awareness of the Son of God's glory that the ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are divinely most suited for. It is worth noting that it makes little difference how much knowledge of God's Word is held if individuals lack the most important knowledge of all, the knowledge revealing that God has placed all things under His Son's feet, that Christ is supreme, and that there is nothing or anyone excepted from the Lord Jesus' far-reaching and universal rule,¹⁸ either on the earth or in heaven.¹⁹

¹⁷ Rev. 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

¹⁸ I Cor. 15:27 *For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.*

Eph. 1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*
Heb. 2:8 *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.*

¹⁹ Matt. 28:18-19 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,*

Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 4:13) *Unto a perfect (that is, full-grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*—In these words are described the second great object of the ministries of the Church—not only the production of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, but the formation of Christ in the soul, as “dwelling in the heart through faith.”

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:13) *Unto a perfect man*—Unto a complete man. This figure is obvious. The apostle compares their condition then to a state of childhood. The perfect man here refers to the man “grown up,” the man of mature life. He says that Christ had appointed pastors and teachers that the infant church might be conducted to “maturity;” or become strong—like a man. He does not refer to the doctrine of “sinless perfection”—but to the state of manhood as compared with that of childhood—a state of strength, vigor, wisdom, when the full growth should be attained; see 1 Corinthians 14:20.²⁰

Unto the measure of the stature—Margin, or age. The word “stature” expresses the idea. It refers to the growth of a man. The stature to be attained to was that of Christ. He was the standard—not in size, not in age—but in moral character. The measure to be reached was Christ; or we are to grow until we become like him.

It is not just that Christians are to come unto a more perfect knowledge of the Son of God, but also that they have been purposed to grow up into such spiritual maturity that their faith, love, and obedience to God mirror Jesus' own. Thus, the measure and/or standard of all Christians is purposed to be that they become so spiritually mature in their faith and lives that their earthly lives together mimic and mirror the life of their Savior. It is for this final purpose that Jesus has given to His church after His ascension the heavenly ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers* so that through their spiritual instruction and divine oversight the entire body of Christ so matures in spirituality, faith, and love that it uniformly reveals the presence of the Savior to all those hungering and thirsting for Him.

and of the Holy Ghost:
20 1 Cor. 14:20 *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*

