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GOSPEL**

**BY**

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# Chapter 1

## Saul of Tarsus

### His Name

The Apostle Paul was born Saul of Tarsus. The name Saul is taken from the Hebrew words *shawl* and *shael* which literally mean to ask or inquire. Is it any wonder Saul has the Biblical image of an intellect? All of his life he was called "ask" or "inquire", so he was constantly inquiring.

After he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus Saul's name was changed to Paul, the Greek word is Paulos, taken from *pauo*. This literally means stop, restrain, quit, desist, and come to an end. And so it was; Saul, a seeker of true religion, was stopped by Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus and became Paul.

### Home Town, Tarsus

Saul was born in Tarsus, a major commercial center on the north coast of the Mediterranean Sea in the country that is now known as Turkey. It can be located easily on a map in the appendix of most Bibles. Find it on a map now. Tarsus was, at that time, a cultural center under strong Greek influence. As the capital of Cilicia on the river Cydnus, it was comparable to Athens and Alexandria.

### Saul's Family

Saul's family was of the Jewish tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of King Saul. In Philippians 3:5 Paul brags, "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews...." It is possible that Saul of Tarsus was named for King Saul, the first king of Israel.

There are indications that Saul's family was prosperous and influential. They were probably tent makers, since Saul was a tent maker. Acts 18:3 says, "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers." Tentmakers of that day were not as tentmakers of our time. To draw an accurate parallel, we should consider tent makers of that day as housing developers or recreational vehicle manufacturers of today.

Through their prosperity and discipline, Saul's family became influential. His father was a Pharisee according to Acts 23:6, "...he cried out in the council, Men

and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee...." Saul also bragged that he was a Hebrew from true Hebrew parents in Philippians 3:5; "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews...." He was not a child of Greek parents who had been converted to Judaism.

The Pharisees were one of three groups of Jews in that day; Sadducees, Essenes, and Pharisees.

### **Essenes**

The Essenes were the puritans of the day. They may have been a monastic type group. One location of the Essenes has been excavated near the Dead Sea, in the area of the Qumran caves. From the excavations it has been found, they baptized by immersion. This was so important to them, they built an elaborate system of aqueducts to supply their baptismal pools with water the year round. They also transcribed scripture scrolls, and may have served as scribes in civil matters as well. It was near these ruins in Qumran that the Dead Sea scrolls were found, including the well preserved Isaiah scroll. The caves in the hills may have served as storage lockers or filing rooms for documents of the Essenes. Some believe that Jesus may have spent time with this Essene sect during the so called "lost years," from the time He was twelve through age thirty.

### **Sadducees**

The Sadducees were the free thinkers of their day, much like the liberals of today. They did not believe in life after death or the resurrection of the dead. That is why they were sad, you see. (Oh, that is an old joke, but it helps us to remember that a Sadducee was one who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead...and may be very SADD-U-CEE.)

### **Pharisees**

It is the third group, the Pharisees, of which Saul of Tarsus and his father were both members. The Pharisees were the formalists of the day. They were very strict in their religious ritualism, and very strict about the law. They were always checking situations against the law and saying, "it is fair, I see." That is why they are called PHAR-I-SEES. (This is another corny joke, but it too will help you to remember the character of the Pharisees.)

The Pharisees separated themselves from traditional religious practice and from civil matters to give themselves to the law of Moses. They also added moral law called Mishna. This Mishna was the digest of the Jewish tradition and compilation of the ritual law. It was the Mishna that put such burdens upon the Israelites. Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel, was the major contributor to the Mishna. In brief, the Pharisees were the religious legalists of the day.

### **Saul's Birth, A. D. 6-7**

Saul was born in Tarsus about A. D. 6-7, some ten years or more after the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Due to an error in establishing the current Roman calendar, the birth of Jesus was not in A. D. 1, but in fact about 4-6 B. C. (Note from the author: The dates and ages given in this book are not to be taken as absolute, but accurate only within three or four years.) Some authorities believe that Jesus was a maximum of ten years older than Saul. Others place Jesus as much as 15 years older than Saul. These differences may seem significant to some, and I mention it just to point out the basic age difference between Jesus and Saul (about a 10 to 15 year's difference).

This age difference shows us that Saul had just been born, or was no more than two years old in Tarsus, when Jesus visited the temple at age twelve.

This age difference also shows us that when Saul was training in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, from age thirteen, Jesus was running the carpenter shop in Nazareth.

### **Saul's Education, A. D. 7-20**

It was in Tarsus that Saul received his excellent education, learning Greek and Hebrew. We find the influence of this dual cultural background in I Corinthians 1:22-24; "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Saul's background as a boy was in the household of a Pharisee. Apparently Saul's love for his father inspired him to follow in Pharisee membership. This influence along with his name Saul, meaning to ask or inquire, molded his character to respond to every situation to judging, "It is fair, I see," or "It is not fair, I see."

### **Saul Age, 13-20**

After Saul's basic education was completed in Tarsus, at approximately age thirteen, he was sent off to boarding school in Jerusalem, away from his family. This was only possible by the wealth and influence of his family.

Saul studied under Gamaliel. According to Acts 22:3, "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day." Gamaliel was the grandson of the legendary Hillel, one of the authorities behind the Mishna. Thus, the character of Gamaliel was added to Saul, compounding his zealous legalism as a defender of the Jewish faith.

With this background from an influential family of Pharisees and his learning under Gamaliel, Saul found favor among the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. Some believe that Saul was a member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the supreme court of Israel, comprised of seventy-one chief priests or the heads of twenty-four classes of priests. They were aged, spiritual elders of wisdom. Some believe that Saul was a member of this noted group. If so, he was a noted exception because of his youth (age 20- 30); however, he may have worked for them in some capacity without being an actual member of the body of elders.

## Chapter 2

### Saul in Acts

Most authorities agree that the Book of the Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke the physician, the author of the Gospel of Luke. He was a Gentile and a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. In Acts 16:11 the personal pronoun changes from "they" to "we", indicating that Luke joined Paul to travel with him.

Although it is called the Acts of the Apostles, a major portion of the Book is devoted to the life, ministry, and travels of the Apostle Paul. This should not surprise us knowing that Luke traveled with Paul and wrote the Book.

#### **Saul's First Appearance**

The first appearance of Saul of Tarsus in the Bible is in Acts 7:58; "...and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."

This happened about five years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ or about thirty-eight years after the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Therefore, Saul would have been in his late twenties (about 28) when Stephen was stoned to death.

Of course, this was not Saul's first involvement in persecution, even though it is the first Biblical report of this activity, as is seen in Philippians 3:6, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church..." In I Timothy 1:13 Paul writes about himself, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious..." Paul says in I Corinthians 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, that I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

#### **Continued Persecution**

In Acts, Chapter Eight, the report of this persecution continues. In verse three we see, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."

#### **Saul's Conversion**

About forty years after the birth of Jesus Christ, when Saul was about thirty years old, he journeyed to Damascus to arrest Christians. The account of this journey is found in Acts 9:1-31. In his zeal, he went to the high priest. Quite possibly this high priest was a member of the Sanhedrin. Saul obtained a letter of authority

from the priest to travel even to Damascus to arrest the Jewish members of "the way" and return them to Jerusalem.

Saul refers to his conversion in Acts 22:5-6. "...And went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. And, it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me."

Before King Agrippa, Paul again relates his conversion. In Acts 26:12-18 we read, "Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both to these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

What a scene that must have been! Saul, and others, zealously going to Damascus to arrest Christians and return them to Jerusalem for imprisonment.

It was midday. The noon sun was bright in the sky in that arid mid-east climate. With sudden surprise, an even brighter light appeared in the sky. Every member of the group fell to the earth as they saw the great light that surrounded them.

Then, Saul alone heard the voice of Jesus. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Saul replied, "Who art thou, Lord?"

The reply came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Then Jesus gave him further instruction about taking the Gospel to the Gentiles. Saul thought he was protecting the Jewish faith, but he was persecuting the members of The Way. Jesus said that Saul was persecuting Him. We should keep this in mind as we relate to other members of the church for we are also relating to Jesus Christ through them.

The light that appeared to them on the Damascus road was so bright that it left Saul blind. According to Acts 9:8-9, "Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus." For three days he stayed in the house of Judas, fasting both food and drink, without his sight.



Acts 9:10-19 continues the story. The Lord spoke to a disciple in Damascus named Ananias and instructed him to go to the house of Judas on Straight Street. There he would find Saul and pray for his healing. Ananias was reluctant to go, for he knew of Saul's reputation and his mission of persecution. Nevertheless, the Lord told Ananias that Saul was a chosen vessel.

Ananias obeyed and went to pray for Saul. Immediately Saul received his sight and was baptized.

Saul then began to preach Christ in Damascus. Acts 9:23 records that after several days of preaching Christ, the Jews in Damascus decided to kill Saul. They watched at the gates of the city day and night. Apparently Saul heard about it and his Christian brothers lowered him down the wall of Damascus in a basket to escape the threat on his life.

### **Journey to Arabia**

In Galatians 1:16-19 Paul reports, "...Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Some interpret this to mean Saul was in Arabia for three years. Others interpret this to mean he traveled a short time in Arabia and then returned to Damascus for the remainder of the three years. All we can really conclude is that three years after his conversion, Paul went to Jerusalem. During those three years he spent time in Arabia. Then he went back to Damascus.

Acts 9:25-26 reports Saul escaping from Damascus by being lowered by the wall in a basket. Verse twenty-six then says, "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem...." as if he went directly from Damascus to Jerusalem. However, this is apparently contrary to what Paul writes in Galatians 1:16- 19.

### **Saul Returns To Jerusalem**

The Christian brethren in Jerusalem were yet afraid of Saul, but Barnabas took him (Acts 9:27) to the apostles to whom Saul gave his testimony.

This is the first mention of Barnabas with Saul. Acts 4:36 introduces Barnabas as one who sold his land and laid the money at the apostles' feet.

Saul then ministered in and around Jerusalem and disputed with the Grecian Jews. They also plotted to kill him. Therefore, the brethren took Saul to Caesarea where he sailed for Tarsus, his home town.

By this time Saul was about thirty-three years old.

## **Saul Called To Antioch**

In Acts 11:19-30 we read that because of the scattering of Jerusalem Christians through Stephen's persecution, men of Cyprus and Cyrene had been saved. These men went to Antioch and started a church with Grecian Jews who had been saved.

This good news was heard by the Jerusalem Apostles and they sent faithful Barnabas to Antioch to check these things out. After a time of fruitful ministry, Barnabas goes to Tarsus, seeking Saul to help him in the ministry. Saul returned to Antioch with Barnabas where they both taught for one year. This teaching produced people known as "little Christs" or Christians.

Prophets from Jerusalem visited Antioch, including one Agabus. He prophesied a dearth throughout the earth. When this prophesy came to pass, the disciples at Antioch sent aid to Jerusalem by Barnabas and Saul.

Saul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem to Antioch in A. D. 48, when Saul was about forty years old. They brought John Mark with them. John Mark was the son of one Mary of Jerusalem, a cousin of Barnabas. It was to John Mark's mother's house that Peter went when he was released from prison. Some believe that John Mark was an early convert of Peter. Others conclude that he was Peter's nephew. There is conclusive evidence that John Mark was the author of the Gospel of Mark, drawing his material from Peter's experience as one of the twelve disciples of Jesus.

## Chapter 3

### The Holy Spirit Calls

After Barnabas and Saul had returned from their benevolence trip to Jerusalem with John Mark, they were praying and fasting with other noted teachers at Antioch. Among them were Simeon called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene. Remember! The Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene started the Church at Antioch. There was also Manoan the foster brother of Herod the Tetrarch according to Acts 13:1.

Acts 13:2-3 reports, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Thus, at about age forty, after some ten to twelve years of faithful Christian service, Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of Christians, an accomplice at Stephens murder, starts his first missionary journey. It had been fifteen to twenty years since the resurrection of Jesus.

Read the book of Acts, Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen for the details.

So the three of them, two separated for the work of Holy Ghost, namely Saul and Barnabas, and one invited quest, John Mark, set out to preach Christ. Trace their journey on the maps in the appendix of your Bible as we review their journey.

#### **Cyprus**

They traveled from Antioch, a short distance from the sea, to the port of Seleucia. From there the three sailed to the island of Cyprus with Barnabas probably in the leadership. This should not be surprising, as we know that Barnabas was from Cyprus, as were the founders of the church at Antioch.

Arriving at the port of Salamis they preached the word of God in the synagogues. Traveling across the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, Barjesus, also known as Elymas. He was with Sergius Paulus, the deputy of Cyprus who had called Barnabas, and Saul to hear the Word of God.

It was here (Acts 13:9) that Saul is called Paul for the first time in the Bible.

Paul became irritated with Barjesus and says, "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season...." (Acts 13:10, 11)

This is the first recorded miracle of Paul. He may have been used of God in healings and miracles in his previous ten to twelve years of ministry, but this is the first one the Holy Spirit chose to be recorded. Note that it is not a healing, but a blinding. You see, Paul had faith for God to deal with Barjesus through blindness, since this is how God dealt with him as he persecuted believers.

When Sergius Paulus saw the power of God working through Paul, he believed.

Now we see Paul as the leader as Acts 13:13 says "...Paul and his company loosed from Paphos...." They sailed from Paphos on Cyprus north to Perga in Pamphylia, on the north shore of the Mediterranean Sea in the area now called Turkey.

## **Perga**

From Perga, John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. Probably he could not handle Paul's strong stand against Barjesus. Remember, Paul was at least forty years old. John Mark was probably a younger man. He was also a friend of Barnabas before he knew Paul. Of course, we must not forget that it was Barnabas and Saul who were called of the Holy Ghost.

## **Antioch of Pisidia**

From Perga the two traveled north to Antioch of Pisidia. They went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and sat down (Acts 13:14). After the reading of the law and the prophets, they were asked if they had any exhortation for the people.

Paul stood and preached a short sermon (Acts 13:17-41). He started with Israel in Egypt and preached through the prophets, judges and kings until he came to Jesus. He declared Jesus to be crucified and resurrected without seeing corruption.

They received the message and Paul and Barnabas were invited back to preach the following Sabbath. Almost the whole city turned out to hear the word of God. The Jews were jealous over the large crowds and turned against them. Paul and Barnabas therefore turned to the Gentiles and many were saved (Acts 13:48).

The Jews stirred up the chief men of the city and Paul and Barnabas were expelled.

## **On To Iconium**

Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off of their feet and went to Iconium (Acts 14). They both went to the synagogue and many Jews and Greeks believed. They preached there for some time with many signs and wonders. However, the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles came against them to stone them.

### **Escape to Lystra and Derbe**

Knowing of the attempt to stone them, Paul and Barnabas escaped to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia. There Paul was used of God to heal a man crippled from his mother's womb.

The people of Lycaonia saw the miracle and called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul they called Mercurius. When Paul and Barnabas heard that the people wanted to make sacrifices to them believing them to be gods, they rent their clothes and cried "We also are men of like passions with you...." But this did not restrain the people.

Then, certain Jews came from Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium (Acts 14:19) and persuaded the people of Lystra to stone Paul. They drug him out of the city, believing he was dead. Yet, God raised him up.

The next day Barnabas and Paul traveled to Derbe. There, they taught and made many disciples.

### **Return Home**

Paul and Barnabas returned by the same route as they had come, through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ministering on the way to those who had received their message. They ordained elders in every church.

After passing through the region of Pisidia, they went to the city of Perga in the region of Pamphylia. From Perga, they went to Attalia, and then sailed to Seleucia, and on to their home church at Antioch.

There they reported all that God had done to open the doors to the Gentiles. They could have reported the persecution, tribulation, and stoning, but they reported what God had done, the Good News.

### **Summary**

Barnabas and Paul went to the Gentiles traveling through:

Syria (region)  
Antioch (city)  
Seleucia  
Cyprus  
Salamis  
Paphos

Pamphylia  
Perga  
Pisidia  
Antioch  
Lycaonia  
Iconium  
Lystra  
Derbe  
Lystra  
Iconium  
Pisidia  
Antioch  
Pamphylia  
Perga  
Attalia  
Syria  
Seleucia  
Antioch.

They were some two to three years on this first journey. At the close of it, Paul had been a Christian about fifteen years, and he was in his mid to late forties. He had not yet written one of his Biblical Epistles.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Jerusalem Conference**

In Acts, Chapter Fifteen, we find a theological controversy which was of no small consequence: the question of circumcision.

Paul and Barnabas were preaching faithfully at Antioch when certain brethren came from Judea. They said, "...Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1) This brought no small dissension and disputation. That is, they had a big argument that could not be settled among themselves.

Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to present their case to the apostles and elders. On the way they reported the conversion of Gentiles, which brought great joy to the believers.

Arriving in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas were received by the church, the apostles, and the elders, declaring all that God had done.

In Acts 15:5 we see, "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses."

Note that these believers who insisted on circumcision were of the sect of the Pharisees. They had come out of the sect, but the sect had not come out of them. I believe they were truly born again in the spirit, but their minds were still programmed with the religious system of the Pharisees.

This problem still exists today. Church-going people have a personal experience with Jesus and they get born again of the Spirit. Rather than leave the religious system behind, they try to add their religious laws to other born again believers.

"The apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter," according to Acts 15:6.

Read Acts 15:6-35 carefully before we review what happened at the conference.

After much disputing, Peter arose and stated his position that the Gentiles were saved by faith. He even said, "To require more would be to tempt God." Finally

Peter says in Acts 15:11, "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

It should not be surprising that Peter would agree with Barnabas and Paul. Barnabas was a friend of Peter of long standing. He was a charter member of the Jerusalem church as we see in Acts 4:36-37. From Peter's background as a fisherman-businessman, we see he was not a theologian, but a practical man. He received the fruit of Paul and Barnabas's ministry among the Gentiles at face value. Peter was persuaded of the theology by the fruit of the ministry.

After Peter spoke, there was silence indicating agreement. Paul and Barnabas stood declaring the miracles and wonders God wrought among the Gentiles.

It seemed as though the issue was settled. No circumcision would be required.

Then James stood to address the conference.

Since there are several men named James in the New Testament, there is some confusion about their identity. However, most agree that this James was the head of the Jerusalem church, the author of the Book of James, and the younger half-brother of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the first part of his speech, James sounded as though he agreed with Peter, Paul, and Barnabas (Acts 15:13-19). In Acts 15:19 James says, "...that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God." Then in verse twenty we find the small but mighty word, "but". James continues, "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." (Acts 15:20)

This speech of James' has the tone of a diplomat or politician in congress. Either James was using diplomacy to keep the Jerusalem church from being split down the middle by this doctrinal disagreement, or he was subtly injecting some legal requirements for the Gentiles. I believe it was a little bit of both. (Does that sound like diplomacy?)

James agreed with Peter, Paul, and Barnabas by not insisting on circumcision. Nevertheless, the spirit of circumcision (or the law) was kept by requiring four following abstinences:

1. from pollution of idols,
2. from fornication,
3. from things strangled, and
4. from blood.

So Paul and Barnabas agreed to take a letter to Antioch and the areas of Syria and Cilicia. Judas and Silas were sent along to confirm the letter by mouth according to Acts 15:27. They may also have gone along to make sure the letters were delivered. Remember, these were real people in the Book of Acts.



Being prophets, Silas and Judas exhorted the brethren at Antioch. After a season, Judas returned to Jerusalem but Silas remained in Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord.

## Chapter 5

### Paul's Second Missionary Journey

"...Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."

Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, who had left them at Perga of Pamphylia during the first journey. Paul did not want him along. The contention became so sharp that Paul and Barnabas split.

It is not surprising that Barnabas and John Mark sailed back to the Island of Cyprus. Remember, Barnabas was from Cyprus. John Mark was a friend of Barnabas before Paul was.

Paul chose Silas, who had returned to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas from the Jerusalem Conference. They traveled north by land through Paul's home town Tarsus in the region of Cilicia.

#### Derbe And Lystra

As Paul and Silas came to Derbe and Lystra they met a disciple named Timotheus. He was the son of a Jewess believer and had a Greek father. Paul wanted Timotheus to join him and Silas, but Timotheus was not circumcised. Because of Paul's recent instruction from the apostles and elders of Jerusalem to abstain from pollutions of idols, from things strangled, from fornication, and from blood, Paul required Timotheus to be circumcised before he traveled with them.

As the three traveled through the cities, they delivered to the churches the decrees perscribed by the apostles and elders from Jerusalem.

Having passed through Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in the regions of Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Phrygia, they traveled north through the region of Galatia.

The Holy Ghost forbad them to preach as they traveled westward through the region called Mysia in Asia Minor. There in the city of Troas, "a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." (Acts 16:9)

In Acts 16:10 we find a curious statement: "And after he had seen the vision, immediately WE...." The use of "we" in this passage indicates for the first time in the Book of Acts that Luke joined Paul, Silas, and Timotheus in Troas.

From Troas they went to Samothracia, and then they sailed on to Neapolis of Macedonia on the north shore of the Aegean Sea. By land they went to the chief city of Philippi.

In Philippi

On the Sabbath they went to the riverside and spoke to the women. There they met Lydia, a seller of purple (cloth, garments) from the city of Thyatira (a city in Mysia from which they had come). She was saved and invited the group to stay with her.

In Philippi, there followed them a young demon possessed girl. Paul got irritated with her as he had with Barjesus. However, he turned to her and cast out the demon according to Acts 16:18. Her masters who profited from her divination were stirred up and took Paul and Silas to the magistrate who beat them and threw them in prison.

In Acts 16:25 we find the familiar story of Paul and Silas praying and singing praises to God at midnight as the other prisoners listened. Then suddenly an earthquake opened the doors of the prison and their shackles were loosed. The prison keeper woke up, thinking the prisoners had escaped, prepared to kill himself. But Paul stopped him by assuring him that all the prisoners were present.

The jailer was born again and took Paul and Silas to wash and feed them. In the morning the magistrates sent a message to release them.

However, Paul would not leave. They had beaten him, a Roman citizen, without a trial and cast him in prison unjustly. Paul insisted that the magistrates come and take him out personally. So they did.

### **On to Thessalonica**

After stopping by Lydia's house they all traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1). As was Paul's manner, he first went to the synagogue and preached. Some of the Jews believed, and a great multitude of Greeks believed. But as was the pattern, a few unbelieving Jews stirred up the whole city against them.

### **On To Berea**

So Paul and Silas were sent out of the city in the middle of the night to Berea. Apparently Timotheus and Luke remained in Thessalonica. The Bereans

received the word and searched the scriptures daily. Many Jews and Greeks came to believe in the city of Berea.

But as in Antioch of Pisidia, the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica heard Paul and Silas were in Berea. So they came to Berea and stirred up the people against them.

### **By Sea To Athens**

Therefore, Paul was sent away by sea, but Silas remained.

Paul went to Athens and sent word for Silas to join him.

In Athens they took Paul to Mars' Hill where he preached (Acts 17:22-34). He had the ears of the philosophy minded Greeks as he spoke of the unknown God (Acts 17:23), God the creator (Acts 17:24), God who made all men to be one, and how we should seek God (Acts 17:27). But when Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked him, and others questioned him.

### **Corinth**

From Athens, Paul came to Corinth where he met Aquila and his wife Priscilla, fellow tentmakers. They, as Jews, had been kicked out of Rome by Claudius.

Again in Corinth, Paul went to the synagogue. When Silas and Timotheus arrived from Macedonia, Paul was stirred to preach Christ. Once again the Jews opposed him and he went therefore to the Gentiles.

Paul stayed with Justus, next door to Crispus, the head of the synagogue. Needless to say, Crispus and his household became believers.

The Lord confirmed Paul's ministry in Corinth in a mighty vision, and he stayed in Corinth teaching for eighteen months.

### **Paul's First Epistle**

Timotheus brought to Paul and Silas a report of the church at Thessalonica. The Thessalonians were concerned about the second coming of Jesus. To minister them about this, Paul writes the letter we now call First Thessalonians. It was written from Corinth about A. D. 52 or 53, some eighteen years after Paul's conversion. This is the first Biblical Epistle of Paul. We will consider it individually in a later chapter of this book. Authorities believe that Second Thessalonians followed the first one by not more than a few months.

### **Persecution in Corinth**

When Gallio became deputy of the region of Achaia (wherein were the cities of Corinth and Athens), the Jews came against Paul and brought him to court.

Gallio refused to hear them and sent them out of the court, claiming that it was not a civil matter but the religious one.

Paul remained in Corinth a while and sailed for home (Antioch) with his friends Aquila and Priscilla. They stopped at Ephesus in Mysia where Aquila and Priscilla remained. Paul stayed briefly before sailing nonstop to Caesarea. He made a brief side trip to greet the Jerusalem church. He probably went to report his obedience to deliver their letter of abstinence to the Gentile churches. After a brief visit he returned to Antioch.

## **Summary**

This second missionary journey lasted about three to four years. At the close of it Paul was about fifty years old, having been a Christian about twenty years.

His first two letters First and Second Thessalonians were written from Corinth during this trip.

On the journey Paul and others visited:

Syria (region)  
Antioch (city)  
Cilicia  
Tarsus  
Lycaonia  
Derbe  
Lystra  
Iconium  
Pisidia  
Antioch  
Galatia  
Mysia  
Assos  
Troas  
Macedonia  
Neapolis  
Philippi  
Thessalonica  
Berea  
Achia  
Athens  
Corinth  
Lydia  
Ephesus  
Judea  
Caesarea  
Jerusalem  
Syria

Antioch.

## Chapter 6

### Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:23 reports that "after he had spent some time there (in Antioch), he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples." This was the beginning of Paul's third missionary journey. At this time Paul was in his late forties or early fifties.

In Acts 18:24-28, we find a little insert which does not directly relate to Paul. It tells of Apollos ministering at Ephesus, even though he knew only the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla heard him in the synagogue. They took him aside and "expounded... the way of God more perfectly." What a lovely way to say that Apollos was corrected about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Apollos went on to Achaia (the region of Corinth) and the brethren wrote for the Corinthians to receive him. Paul made mention of Apollos in the introduction of First Corinthians which we will consider in a later chapter of this book.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul was passing through the areas of Galatia, Phrygia, and Lydia to Ephesus. There he discovered they had not received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul ministered to them. The Holy Ghost came on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Paul taught in the synagogue in Ephesus for three months until some were hardened and believed not. He departed from the synagogue taking the believers with him into the school of Tyrannus where he taught daily for two years. During this time God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul in that handkerchiefs or aprons were taken from Paul's body to the sick and they were healed (Acts 19:11-12).

During this time the seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, found out the hard way that they could not cast out demons in the name of Jesus whom Paul knew. Their authority had to be in the name of Jesus whom they knew. When they tried to exorcise a demon in the name of Jesus whom Paul knew, the man prevailed against them and sent them running out of the house naked.

#### **Letter to the Galatians**

While in Ephesus, Paul probably wrote the epistle to the Galatians. Some believe that it was written from Corinth in the latter part of this same journey. An

important point is that Paul had traveled through Galatia at the beginning of this trip and found there the influence of certain Judaizing Christians who were insisting that the Galatian Christians be circumcised. The Book of Galatians will be considered in detail in a later chapter.

### **First Corinthian Letter**

Some time during his stay of over two years in Ephesus, Paul also wrote the first letter to the Corinthians. As you remember, he visited Athens and Corinth on his second missionary journey some three or four years earlier. He knew the Corinthians and their character as is indicated in this letter. We will review this letter in a later chapter of this book.

### **Trouble With The Idol Makers**

In preparation for further travel through Macedonia (the region of Thessalonica), Achaia (the region of Corinth), and on the Jerusalem, Paul sent Timotheus and Erastus ahead. He remained in Ephesus for a while. A silversmith named Demetrius made silver idols for the goddess Diana. Paul had been so effective in Ephesus and throughout all Asia in converting those who had worshipped the goddess Diana to Christ that the business of the silversmiths had been seriously hindered.

These silversmiths stirred up trouble resulting in a riot in Ephesus. The town clerk settled the whole problem by getting the attention of the mob and telling them that if Demetrius and the other silversmiths had any quarrel with Paul they should take him to court.

### **On To Macedonia**

Paul had had experience with angry crowds before. After the uproar ceased, Paul embraced the brethren and left for Macedonia (Acts 20:1).

### **Second Corinthian Letter**

As Paul traveled through Macedonia, he went through Thessalonica where he most probably met Titus. Titus had probably been in Corinth when Paul's first letter to the Corinthians arrived. Therefore, Titus gave Paul a report of their reaction to his first letter to the Corinthians. This prompted Paul to write the epistle, Second Corinthians, to them. As we review it in a later chapter, note the softer tone, nearly an apology for the harshness of the first Corinthian letter.

### **Short Stay in Corinth**

Paul traveled through Macedonia to Greece (Corinth) where he stayed three months before he purposed to return to Antioch of Syria through Macedonia.  
Letter to Roman Christians



While staying a short time in Corinth, Paul wrote the letter to the Romans. He had never been in Rome, that we know of, as a Christian; however, he knew the nature of the Romans by his experience with them as occupiers of Israel and Jerusalem while he studied under Gamaliel. Remember, he knew of the Roman treatment of the Christians by his friendship with Priscilla and Aquila, who had been kicked out of Rome as Christians by Caesar Augustus. I am sure he had spent enough time with them in tentmaking and ministry to be well acquainted with the Roman Christians who are addressed in this letter.

### **Returning through Troas**

By now there was quite a group of people with Paul: Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius and Timotheus from Derbe, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. They all went before Paul and Luke and waited for them at Troas. It took them five days to get Troas and they rested there seven days before they went on. It was during their stay at Troas that a young man named Eutychus fell asleep during one of Paul's lengthy sermons and fell out the window from the third floor to his death. Paul ran down and raised him from the dead. He then returned to the third- floor room, and after eating, continued to talk until dawn. (Acts 20:4-11)

### **On to Assos**

Paul apparently walked to Assos as the others went by ship. They met him there where he joined them to sail on to Mitylene. From Assos they sailed on to Chios, Samos, Trogyllium and Miletus, day by day.

Paul was determined to sail past Ephesus for he was in a rush to get to Jerusalem in time for the feast of Pentecost. So Paul sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus to come to him at Miletus.

### **Sermon to the Ephesian Elders**

Paul's message to the elders of the church of Ephesus is recorded in Acts 20:19-35. Paul tells them he is bound in the spirit as he returns to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to him there. In Verse 28 he exhorted them to feed the church of God which was purchased with God's own blood. Paul warned that when he was gone "grievous wolves" would enter in among them, and men would arise with perverse things to draw away disciples. "Therefore watch," he said. He exhorted to remember; for three years he ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. He commended them to the Word of God's grace, to support the weak, and to remember the words of Jesus Christ; "It is more blessed to give than to receive." After they prayed, they all fell on Paul's neck and wept and kissed him. They followed him onto the ship, not wanting to say goodbye, for they knew they would never see him again.

### **Sailing on to Jerusalem**

From Troas they sailed to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara. There they caught a ship sailing unto Phenicia, past Cyprus and directly to Tyre of Syria (north of Caesarea). They remained there seven days before sailing south to Ptolemais. They remained there one day before traveling on to Caesarea where they stayed with Philip.

### **Paul in Caesarea**

Philip had four daughters which were prophets. While staying there, the prophet Agabus joined them from Judaea. He took Paul's girdle and prophesied, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth the girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." (Acts 21:11) They urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

### **Summary**

After spending a period of two and one-half to three years on his third missionary journey, Paul returned once again to Jerusalem. The route of this third journey very closely paralleled his second missionary journey. Paul completed this journey about A. D. 58. He had been saved about thirty years and was in his mid-fifties in age.

During this journey, it is commonly believed that Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians, both letters to the church at Corinth, and the Letter to the Roman Christians.

## Chapter 7

### Last Jerusalem Visit

Arriving in Caesarea after his third missionary journey, Paul was prophesied to by and prophet from Judea named Agabus. He prophesied that Paul would be bound hand and feet and be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. Nevertheless Paul was determined to move on to Jerusalem.

#### Report to Elders

Other disciples of Caesarea and Mnason of Cyprus went with Paul and Luke to Jerusalem. Note in Acts 21:17 the pronoun "we" appears again, telling us that, Luke, the writer of this Bible Book was with them.

They were received gladly and the following day went to James, the half brother of Jesus, the bishop of Jerusalem. Remember, James was the one who diplomatically required Paul to carry the letter to the Gentiles requiring them to abstain from idols, from blood, from things strangled and from fornication. There Paul testified to James and all of the elders what things God had wrought among the Gentiles.

#### Instructions to Purify

Hearing the good report they glorified God and said this to Paul in Acts 21:20-25: "...Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: and 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. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that they say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; them 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. As 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."

If you read this carefully you will realize that none of the accusations which were brought against Paul reflected the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Elders at

Jerusalem were quite determined to persecute Paul for his stand against circumcision.

### **Paul Submits**

Nevertheless, Paul submitted himself to their request to purify himself. Understand that this process of shaving ones head and fasting was a purification prescribed under the law. Paul went to the temple to signify the accomplishment of his purification. When the seven days were almost ended, Jews from Asia (the area where Paul had traveled, including Ephesus, Corinth, and Galatia) saw Paul and stirred up the people to lay hands on him not for good but for evil. They cried, "Here is the man that brought Greeks into our temple and polluted it as he has this temple with his own presence." The whole city was stirred up! They forced Paul out of the temple and closed the doors.

### **Paul Rescued**

As the mob was taking Paul to beat him to death, the chief captain of Jerusalem heard of the riot. He ran with soldiers and centurions to stop the riot. When the soldiers arrived they quit beating Paul. The captain then put Paul in chains and demanded who he was and what he had done. When the crowd could not satisfy the captain, he took him to the castle.

As the crowd chanted, "away with him," Paul asked permission of the captain to speak from the stairs of the castle. The captain was surprised he could speak Greek. He thought Paul was an Egyptian who had led four thousand murderers into the wilderness. Paul explained he was a Jew from Tarsus and the captain let him speak.

As Paul spoke in the Hebrew tongue they became even more quiet. Paul told them how he was a Jew born in Tarsus and educated under Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He spoke of how he persecuted the Christians, but that how Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Paul related how Jesus commissioned him to take the Good News to the Gentiles. Paul spoke of instructions he received from the Lord to leave Jerusalem quickly while he was in a trance in the temple. Read the complete detailed message in Acts 22:1-21.

The crowd would not receive Paul's message. They said, "...it is not fit that he should live." The captain took him into the castle. They were going to examine him by scourging and tied him with thongs. Paul then asked the centurion, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" When they realized that he was a Roman citizen, they loosed him. The following day Paul was brought before the chief priest.

### **Paul Before The High Priest**

Paul said just one thing before the High Priest had them slap him on the mouth: "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

SLAP! Paul really let them have it then, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Read Acts 23:1-10 for all the details. Paul found out there were both Pharisees and Sadducees among them. In wisdom, he caused them to fight against one another. The captain removed Paul to keep him from being torn apart by the mob.

### The Lord Appears Again

That night the Lord appeared to Paul with these words of comfort, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

The next day forty Jews made a vow that they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They went to the priest that he might persuade the captain to release Paul to them. Paul's nephew heard of this and went to Paul to warn him. When his nephew told the captain, he "made ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen three score and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night." So Paul was taken out of Jerusalem to Felix the governor with a letter of explanation of his situation.

When Paul was presented to Felix, he said he would hear Paul's case when his accusers were come. Paul was sent to Herod's judgment hall. In five days Ananias the high priest, the elders and Tertullus arrived. Tertullus was the spokesman for the group. Read his accusations in Acts 24:3-9. Tertullus accused Paul of sedition among the Jews and of being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Paul gives his reply in Acts 24:10-21. He basically said, "I believe in the law, but also in the resurrection of the dead. They cannot prove any of their accusations against me."

Felix then said that when the captain, Lysias, would come down to give his side of the story, then he would consider the matter again. In the mean time, Paul was freed.

After some days, Felix and his Jewish wife called Paul again and heard him concerning his faith in Christ. His testimony caused Felix to shake. He commanded Paul to leave, that he would call for him again. He was expecting Paul to try to bribe him for his release.

After two years, Porcius Festus came to replace Felix as governor of Judea (Acts 24:27). After only three days at his new job, Festus went to Jerusalem. The chief priests tried to persuade him to send Paul to Jerusalem that they might kill him on the way. Festus denied them, and after eight days they went to Caesarea.

The next day the Jews assembled with Festus and Paul to accuse Paul of many things. Paul denied them all, proclaiming his innocence. Festus asked if Paul was

willing to go to Jerusalem. Paul however, stood his ground to be tried in Caesarea, the seat of judgment. Paul then appealed to Caesar for judgment. After Festus conferred with the council, he agreed.

After certain days, the Jewish king Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to visit Festus, the Roman governor. He related to King Agrippa Paul's case, claiming that Felix, the previous governor, left Paul in bonds. Agrippa was told of Paul's appeal to Caesar Augustus.

The next day king Agrippa and Bernice came with Festus, and the chief captains, and the principle men of the city to hear Paul. Festus introduced Paul by reviewing his case from Festus' own self justifying view point.

King Agrippa granted Paul permission to speak. Once again Paul started his story with his life history. He wanted to present himself as a good Jew. Read the account in Acts 26:1-23. Paul told of how he persecuted the Christians and his experience with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. He shared with Agrippa the comission Jesus gave him through that appearance. He then explained that the Jews were now persecuting him because he took this message of repentance and good works to the Gentiles. Paul concludes by saying, "Having therefore obtained help from God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

Festus interrupted, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

Paul replied by saying that he was not mad, but just determined that this truth should not be kept from King Agrippa.

Agrippa replied, "Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Festus, and Agrippa, and Bernice agreed among themselves that Paul had done nothing worthy of death. They would have released him had he not appealed to Caesar Augustus.

## **Summary**

Paul spent over two years of his life after his third missionary journey, in Jerusalem and Cesarea. He never returned to his home church in Antioch. He never again visited the churches in Galatia, or Ephesus, or Thessalonica, or any of the churches in Asia Minor. He was on his way to Rome where he was yet to write most of his epistles.

## Chapter 8

### Final Journey

After spending more than two years in Caesarea, waiting on a trial, Paul is finally sent off to Rome for his appeal to Caesar. At this time, Paul is in his late fifties, or possibly sixty years old.

This final journey of the great Apostle Paul is recorded in the last two chapters of the Book of Acts, Chapters 27 and 28. Read those before going on with this summary.

In Acts 27:1 Luke writes, "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy...." The use of we in this sentence tells us that Luke was traveling with Paul to Rome.

From Caesarea, they sailed north to Sidon where Paul was allowed to visit friends. From Sidon they sailed north and west past Cyprus to Myra, a city of Lycia (Acts 27:5). At Myra, the centurion in charge found another ship sailing to Italy. From there they sailed west past Rhodes and south of Crete and the city of Lasea.

The authorities did not heed Paul's warning about the dangers lying ahead on the journey, but sailed on. Soon a great wind arose, called Euroclydon (Acts 27:14). The wind was so fierce, that they struck sail and let the boat run with the wind. The next day they threw out the cargo, and the day after they threw out the equipment of the ship. Still there was great danger of all aboard the ship being destroyed.

Acts 27:21 tells us that Paul was standing in the midst of the passengers and crew them and saying something on this order: "You should have listened to me and never left Crete. But be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of life among us even though the boat will be lost." Paul then declared that the angel of the Lord had come to him in the night and shown him what would happen. Now remember, He and Luke are probably the only two Christians on the boat. The rest are Romans and possibly a few traditionalist Jews, and Paul had the courage to tell them the angel of the Lord visited him in the night.

The shipmen determined that they must be approaching land, so they cast out four anchors to hold the ship fast until daylight. The shipmen pretended to cast an anchor out of the bow of the ship but were really going into a life boat, leaving

the others behind. Paul warned the centurion that if they did not stay in the ship their life would not be spared. The soldiers (reporting to the centurion) cut the ropes holding the boat and it fell away, preventing the shipmen from leaving the ship.

Paul then encouraged all to eat since it had been fourteen days of doing without food, because of their fight with the storm. They all ate and were encouraged, all two hundred and seventy-six people on the ship.

They then threw out the remaining wheat to lighten the ship. The anchor ropes were cut. The main sail was hoisted and they sailed for shore until they ran aground.

The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners lest they swim away and escape, but the centurion kept them from doing so. Some then swam to shore, and others found their way to shore on broken pieces of the ship.

### **The Island of Melita (Malta)**

When they came to shore they found that they were on the island of Melita. The barbarous (meaning foreign) people there were very kind to them building a fire for warmth and to dry from the storm and shipwreck.

Paul was gathering sticks to put on the fire when a poisonous snake came out of the warm place of the fire and bit him on the hand. Immediately the barbarians (foreigners) thought to themselves that Paul must have been a murderer and God was taking vengeance on him. Paul simply shook off the viper and did not die or have any problems because of the bite. After observing Paul for some time, the barbarians concluded he was a god (Acts 28:6).

Paul and Luke were lodged by Publius, the chief man of the island. His father was sick with fever and dysentery. Paul laid hands on him, and he was healed. That started a revival on the island and many were healed.

After spending three months on the island Paul and the others departed by ship for Syracuse. They were in Syracuse three days before they sailed to Rhegium, and then on to Puteoli, on the coast of Italy south of Rome. Meeting other Christians in Puteoli, they remained seven days before traveling on to Rome. Along the way the brethren met them from Appii and were a great encouragement to Paul.

In Rome, the other prisoners were delivered to the captain of the guard, but Paul dwelt by himself with a soldier assigned to guard him. After three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews and spoke to them. He told them of what brought him to Rome (Acts 28:17-20). Paul was surprised that they had not been informed by letter. The Roman Jews knew nothing of the persecution of the Jerusalem Jews against him. Many Jews, therefore, came to Paul and he spoke to them concerning Jesus. Some of them believed, but others did not. When they could



not agree among themselves concerning what Paul told them, he prophesied unto them from Isaiah 6:9, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (See Matthew 13:14, 15.) "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Acts 28:28). After that the Jews left and talked much about it all.

Paul lived for two years under house arrest in Rome. During that time he had great freedom to teach the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. While in Rome Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and II Timothy.

It was in Rome that Paul died between A. D. 64 and 68, at the approximate age of sixty to sixty-two. Tradition says that he was beheaded as was the mandate of Nero for all Christians. No doubt this apostle of God, who had murdered many before he met Jesus, had run his course and fought the good fight of faith to the end.

## **Chapter 9**

### **First and Second Thessalonians**

#### **Introduction**

The first letter that Paul wrote that we have any Biblical record of is First Thessalonians. He was in his late forties and had been a Christian some eighteen years before writing this first letter to the Thessalonians. As we have found in our review of his journeys, First Thessalonians was not written until Paul's second missionary journey. Remember, Paul had traveled on this second trip from Antioch overland through Galatia to Troas, where he had a vision to go to Macedonia. He obeyed the vision and he, Silas, and Timothy went into Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and then south to Athens and Corinth.

From Corinth, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to determine how that new church was doing. Timothy brought a report to him in Corinth. The Christians at Thessalonica were concerned that Jesus Christ had returned and they had missed Him. Therefore, Paul writes this letter back to Thessalonica from Corinth in the year A. D. 52 or 53.

Keep in mind that Paul had been through the persecutions of his first missionary journey and the disputation or argument with many of the leaders in Jerusalem, especially James. The very purpose of this second of his missionary journeys was to take the instruction of abstaining from the pollution of idols, from things sacrificed, from blood and from fornication, to the Gentile Christians.

#### **First Thessalonians**

Before you read this review and commentary of First Thessalonians, read the Letter itself. It is only four pages long in most Bibles and will take a few minutes of your time.

In Chapter One, verse one, Paul writes from Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. He is obviously referring to himself, Silas, and Timothy. Here, as in the introduction of most of his letters, he invokes a blessing on them: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." He does not, however, state the authority of his apostleship from God as he does in the Galatian, Ephesian, and Colossian letters. This could be that Paul was not yet so aware of his apostolic assignment from God, or that this letter was not such a letter of

correction or exhortation as the others. Since First Thessalonians is a letter of encouragement, it was not necessary for Paul to pronounce the authority with which he wrote.

Paul then continues on with very positive words of encouragement to the brethren concerning their faith, labor of love, and patience (verse 3). He brags on the fact that they received the word with much assurance. He reminds the Thessalonians that they are examples to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia (Athens and Corinth). Why is Paul so positive toward them in this first chapter? The answer is simple. They have been discouraged. They have been told that the Lord Jesus Christ had already returned and they missed Him. For them it must have been like telling your children that Santa Claus came and left nothing. Certainly it would be discouraging to think that Jesus had come again, while loving and waiting for Him, and somehow miss the rapture. That is the state in which Timothy found them when Paul sent him to Thessalonica. Paul writes to them to encourage them.

## **Chapter Two**

Paul continues in Chapter Two with this encouragement, but he changes the approach a little. He begins to remind them of how he boldly came to them suffering persecution to bring the Gospel. They received him and the message. The message was not given with guile or flattering words to find favor with men (verses 3-7). They came to Thessalonians gently to nourish and cherish them as a nurse would her children, because he loved them. This Gospel from God was not only imparted, but also their own souls, because they loved the people in Thessalonica (verse 8).

From Chapter Two, verse nine, Paul's tone becomes a little firmer, yet with great love and concern. He is attempting to get these discouraged saints to be encouraged enough to stand up on the inside and resist the false report that discouraged them in first place. He is not only lifting them up in encouragement, but he begins to guide the Thessalonians to "walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." Paul pushes them a little by reminding them of the suffering he went through to bring them the Gospel.

## **Chapter Three**

In Chapter Three, Paul reviews the circumstances that lead up to the writing of this letter. He sent Timothy to establish and comfort them. He said in effect, "we told you there would be tribulations. So I also sent Timothy to see what the tribulation had done among you. Timothy returned with a good report about your faith and love." Then Paul said that his afflictions had been comforted by their faith. Paul really knows how to build them up. They were obviously discouraged, but Paul was telling them what a great encouragement they had been to him.

Then Paul slips in a little instruction in verse ten, "...that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." Even though they have been known by their faith throughout Macedonia, it is not yet fully complete.

Paul concludes Chapter Three as though he were bringing the letter to a close, with another blessing: "may the Lord Jesus Christ direct us to you; may you increase in love toward one another; may your hearts be established unblameable in holiness at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Note how Paul speaks of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as though it be future tense, which it is. Remember, the Christians at Thessalonica were discouraged because they thought that the Lord Jesus Christ had already come for the second time.

## **Chapter Four**

Paul continues in Chapter Four as if it were an after thought. He instructed to abstain from fornication. This is one of the abstinences which Paul was instructed to deliver to the churches on his second missionary journey. These abstinences were meant for the Gentile Christians in Galatia and Asia. Nevertheless, Paul's agreeing with this instruction leads him to share it with those in Thessalonica. It could be that Paul knew of fornication and concupiscence among them so he took this occasion to instruct them concerning their behavior. As we read First and Second Corinthians, we will see that there was much problem with fornication and adultery among Corinthian Christians. The people of Thessalonica were possibly under the same influence, being not far from Corinth geographically.

Chapter Four, verses 14-17, are the heart of this First Thessalonians letter. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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: 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." This is the Gospel, the Good News.

## **Chapter Five**

When Jesus comes again, Paul said that they did not need to know. Jesus will come as a thief in the night, as He said, recorded in Matthew 24:43. More encouragement follows as Paul tells them they are not in darkness but in light. The thief will not catch them in darkness because they are not in darkness. However, they should not fall asleep spiritually and become children of the night.

Paul tells them in verse eight, as children of the day to be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. Their faith and love, which Paul has repeatedly spoken of in this letter, will protect their hearts. Their heads or minds will be protected by their continuing hope of their

salvation or second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in this case. God has not appointed them or us to wrath, but that we all might be saved through Jesus Christ. Christ died for us, and whether we are awake spiritually or asleep spiritually, we should live together with Him.

Paul encourages them to encourage one another and to know them which labor among them. Why would Paul exhort them to know their fellow laborers? Someone among them spread the lie that the Lord Jesus Christ had come again and they all had missed Him. If they knew those who labored among them, that person would not have been effective in rumor spreading.

The letter is then closed with a list of things which is the will of God for them and all Christians (verses 16-22):

1. "Rejoice evermore.
2. "Pray without ceasing.
3. "In everything give thanks.
4. "Quench not the Spirit.
5. "Despise not prophesying.
6. "Prove all things.
7. "Hold fast that which is good.
8. "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

The closing prayer of Paul contains a familiar passage which we frequently use in our spirit, soul, and body teaching: "...and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thessalonians 5:23)

And finally Paul closes with the same statement he opened the letter with: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." (I Thessalonians 5:28)

## **Second Thessalonians**

Not many weeks after Paul wrote the First Letter to the Thessalonians, he followed with a second letter. It is a bit shorter than the first letter, but it reinforces many of the points of the first. It would appear that someone wrote a letter to them as though it was from Paul. This may have been the primary reason for the second letter. Paul felt he needed to counteract the effect of that counterfeit letter.

### **Chapter One**

Once again Paul greets them from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. He blesses them with grace and peace from God. He does not defend his apostolic authority as he does in many other letters.

In this letter, Paul sounds more irritated with those who are troubling the Christians in Thessalonica. He speaks in general terms against those who do not

know God. In flaming fire Jesus will take vengeance on them that do not know God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God was his message.

## **Chapter Two**

Here the exhortation is not to be "soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." The phrase "by letter as from us" speaks of a counterfeit letter that has disturbed them.

In verse three, caution is given to "let no man deceive you" about the second coming of Jesus. There will be a great falling away first so that the son of perdition is revealed. Then Paul injects, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

For several verses Paul speaks in strong terms about the fate of the wicked. Then he quickly adds, "...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth...therefore, brethern, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught...." (II Thessalonians 2:13-15).

Paul then closes the letter with a general exhortation to separate themselves from those who do not walk uprightly, to follow the example which he set among them while he was there. "Be not weary in well-doing," he said in Chapter 3, verse 13, as he does also in Galatians 6:9. The very last sentence of the second epistle to the Thessalonians is a repeat of his opening blessing: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

## Chapter 10

### Galatians

#### Time and Place

Most authorities agree that Galatians, an epistle of strong doctrinal declaration, was written during Paul's third missionary journey. However, there is some disagreement about when and where it was written.

Some believe that it was written from Ephesus, after Paul had passed through Galatia, on this third missionary journey. If that is the case, it would probably have been written between the first and second letter to the Corinthian church.

Others believe that it was written from Corinth before his letter to the Romans, somewhat later during this third journey.

We will consider the book of Galatians here in this book as though it were written from Ephesus, although I hold no strong opinion about the time or place of its writing other than that it was written during this third journey.

Rather than review the Book of Galatians between the reviews of First and Second Corinthians, I will review it here so as to not interrupt the consideration of the two Corinthian letters.

#### Galatia

Other epistles of Paul are written to single churches in certain cities, but this book of Galatians is a circular letter written to the group of churches in the region of Galatia.

Many Bible maps indicate Galatia to be a rather small region separate from other states of Asia Minor, now called Turkey. The small region includes Galatia, Cappadocia, Lycaonia, Cilicia, Pisidia, Pamphylia, Phrygia, Bithynia, Mysia, Lycia, and Caria.

Galatia has been used by others, however, to refer to the central area of Asia Minor which would include Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pamphylia, and Phrygia. It is my opinion that the letter to the Galatian churches implies this more general use of Galatia, central Asia Minor.

My reason for this opinion is that it was in these towns and regions of Pisidian Antioch, and the Lycaonian cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe that Paul was so effective to win Gentiles to Christ. It was to these Gentile Christians that Paul was instructed to deliver the letter of abstinences from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from fornication, and from things strangled. And this he did on the second journey before this epistle was written on the third journey.

I therefore believe that this Galatian letter was to the churches at Pisidian Antioch, and the Lycaonian cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe as well as other unnamed churches. Keep this in mind as we read strong statements in Galatians concerning faith, grace and righteousness in contrast to circumcision.

## **The Galatian People**

History tells us that Asia Minor was settled by the Gauls. The Gauls as a group of people are noted for their emotional temperament. They are said to have volatile personalities and react to things emotionally. Remember how Paul and Barnabas were first received in the synagogues of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe with joy. Then later on they were kicked out not only of the synagogue but also the towns. Yet, many held to their doctrine. This illustrates my point.

Because of their emotional temperament, the Galatians did not tend to depend upon reason and logic to make their choices. Consequently they were easily swayed by Judaizing Christians that they needed to be circumcised to know God or to be saved.

As we will see, this was grievous to Paul, who was so aware of the failures of circumcision and the law to produce spiritual life.

## **Chapter One**

Before we proceed to review and comment on the book of Galatians, read the entire Book. It will not take long to read these few pages in the Bible.

Paul opens the epistle to the Galatians, as he did most other letters, with a declaration of his apostleship. Apparently, his doctrine, his ministry, and his authority as an apostle had all been put to question by the Judaizing Christians who were causing problems in Galatia. His ambassadorship was not of men, neither by men. He was not sent to them by the church at Antioch of Syria, or by the men of that church, but by Jesus Christ and by God who raised Christ from the dead. Paul's authority was given by Jesus on the Damascus road, and Jesus got that authority from God, who had authority to raise Jesus from the dead.

In Chapter One, verse three, we read the blessing found in most of Paul's letters, "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Then he quickly adds, "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." This latter statement is unique to this letter. Even in the introduction Paul brings the attention of the Galatian Christians to the work of the Cross, by implication the work of the Cross only, to forgive us of sins and deliver us from the world, including religion.

In Chapter One, verse six, Paul begins one of the strongest exhortations in all of his letters. Although written to the Galatians, it is an exhortation which all Christians should check their lives with every day. Galatians 1:6-9 says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

You must admit, that is a strong statement. Either Paul himself was deceived or God was boldly proclaiming the only Gospel, NO OTHER GOSPEL, through Paul. Paul first marvels, or is struck with wonder, that they are so soon removed from Christ, yes, from God. Verse six refers to who calls, "from him that called you into the grace of Christ...." The only "Him" that called them was God. A capital "H" should have been used in "him" in the King James Version. Paul is saying the Galatians are removed from God, and he marvels that it happened so quickly.

Looking at verse six in even greater detail, we read, "...unto another (heteros) gospel." The Greek word for another used here is heteros. It means qualitatively completely different or opposed to it. In verse seven we continue to read, "which is not another (allos)...." The Greek word used for another in this verse is allos. It literally means quantitatively different, or similar but having something added to it. The English makes no distinction between these two others, and that is unfortunate. The Greek reflects the difference which Paul is dealing with in these two others.

Applying these meanings to verses six and seven we would get this meaning or understanding: "I am struck with wonder and amazement that you are so quickly removed from God that called you into the grace of Christ unto a gospel that is completely opposed to the Gospel of Christ: which is not a similar gospel with a small addition of circumcision; but there are some that trouble you, and desire to completely transform to the opposite the good news of Jesus Christ."

In Galatians 1:8, Paul then states that even if he preaches "a good news" that goes beyond that Good News that he brought to them originally, or a messenger from Heaven bring a good news that goes beyond the Good News he originally brought to them, "let them be accursed." Paul is so confident of the Gospel of Christ that he considers the different (heteros) gospel to be deception. From this we see that Paul was just as zealous for Christ as he was against Christ before his conversion. "Let them be accursed" means let them be anathema, that is, cut off from God. This is not an excommunication from the church; this is to be spiritually cut off from God.

Paul is not cursing them, nor is he instructing the saints to curse them, but he is saying the next best (or worst) thing. Let them be cut off from God and thereby spend eternity in Hades and after that the Lake of Fire.

As if it were not enough to write this very strong “no-other-Gospel” statement once, Paul repeats it. He even acknowledges his repetition for emphasis. In Galatians 1:9, he enforces, "As we have said before, so say I now again...." Then Paul repeats his “no-other-Gospel” exhortation. Paul does not want them to miss the point; there is NO OTHER GOSPEL than what he preached to them.

It is quite possible that Paul is writing this to them because he may have preached another (heteros) gospel to them as he brought them the letter from the Jerusalem brethren exhorting them to abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from fornication, and from things strangled. Paul delivered that letter to them on his second missionary journey. Then, passing through Galatia on his third journey, he found that Judaizing Christians were teaching circumcision, contrary to what was agreed upon at the Jerusalem conference. Quite frankly, Paul may have become a bit exasperated that the Jerusalem brethren would not or could not control the other (heteros) gospel of circumcision. Therefore, in this letter to the Galatian churches, Paul throws off all restraint about any additions to the Gospel that even he may have brought them, and boldly exhorts them to return to "The Gospel" of Christ.

Before Paul continues with an explanation of the Gospel of Christ, he injects something of an apology, but yet a statement of declaration, in verse ten. He is not seeking to please men. By implication this includes the elders at Jerusalem. If he seeks to please men, he would not be a servant of Christ. From Chapter one, verse eleven through verse twenty-four, Paul declares how he received the Gospel of Christ from Christ Himself, by revelation, and not from men.

In Galatians 1:18 we find help in the timing in Paul's life in that it states, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem...." That is, it was three years after his conversion before he went to visit the brethren at Jerusalem; even then he visited Peter for only fifteen days, and James, the Lord's half brother.

The NO OTHER GOSPEL which Paul is referring to in Chapter One is the gospel which he received from Christ by revelation. The other (heteros) gospel, which is not a “gospel” that Paul refers to, is illustrated by circumcision in later chapters of the Letter.

## **Chapter Two**

In Chapter Two, Paul defends his teaching of the Gospel of grace by examining the doctrine and lives of those who promote circumcision.

Fourteen years after his first brief visit with Peter and James, Paul returns to Jerusalem. This was at the close of his first missionary journey.

In Galatians 2:2 Paul says he spoke privately to them of reputation to avoid any embarrassment to them if he had been preaching wrong doctrine, which he had not. Titus was compelled to be circumcised because of the "false brethren", yes, "false brethren", who take them out of their liberty in Christ and bring them into bondage. This obviously irritated Paul who said in verse six, for they "who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." Note carefully the word "seemed", which means appears to be something they are not. Paul uses the same term in verse nine as he refers to "...James, Cephas (Peter), and John, who seemed to be pillars...."

In verses seven and eight of Chapter Two, Paul speaks of the gospel of uncircumcision, which he was commissioned to take, and the gospel of circumcision, which Peter was commissioned to take. This can be confusing to some, since Paul is saying very boldly there is only one Gospel. There is not a gospel of circumcision. Yet, Paul uses the phrase "gospel of circumcision." Paul is really not talking about two gospels; he is talking about taking the one and only Gospel to two groups of people. These two groups are: one who holds to the necessity of circumcision, the Jews; the other being the Gentiles believing in uncircumcision. Paul was commissioned to take the one and only Gospel to the Gentiles. Peter was commissioned to take the one and only Gospel to the Jews.

This is confirmed in verse nine as Paul says that when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, realized that Christ gave Paul the Gospel of grace, they agreed that he should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.

In verse eleven through fourteen, Paul speaks of confrontation with Peter. Paul challenges Peter's doctrine because he was double-minded. Peter ate with Paul and the uncircumcised Gentiles until other Jews came from James. Then Peter withdrew and would not eat with Paul and the uncircumcised Gentiles. Apparently, Barnabas also was influenced by fear of the circumcision brethren. Remember, Barnabas spent much time in Jerusalem before the elders sent him to Antioch, to help build the church there, where he enlisted Paul's help.

Paul observed Peter's and Barnabas' double-minded behavior and boldly challenged them before all the brethren. "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" In other words, "If you as a Jew eat with the Gentiles, how can you require the gentiles to be circumcised?"

Paul closes Chapter Two, from verses sixteen through twenty-one, with his first strong doctrinal statement in the Book of Galatians. Read these verses. Paul is saying that even we who are naturally Jews know that a man cannot be made right with God by works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Paul says that even the Jews have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be made right with God by the faith of Jesus Christ, not by works of the Law.

Paul says that if he builds again (verse eighteen), by going back to the law, the thing he destroyed, namely the law, he makes himself a transgressor of the faith of Christ.

Then Paul writes our old friend Galatians 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."

This is a mysterious statement if you do not understand spirit, soul, and body. But with that understanding it is easy to see what Paul is saying.

The essence of Paul's message is: My old spirit man is crucified, dead and buried by faith in Christ. Nevertheless, I am alive. Yet, the old man is not the one who lives, but the Christ spirit lives in me, that resurrection spirit. And the physical life I live, I live by the faith that the Son of God demonstrated in the Father, by submitting himself to the work of the cross. That trust of the Son in the Father has made physical life available to me. So I live this physical life by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and willingly gave himself as a substitutional sacrifice for me.

Galatians 2:20 is frequently quoted, but seldom do we hear the companion verse Galatians 2:21; "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Permit me to give you the Kaiser Emphasized Version. "I do not make the grace-power of God of no effect; for if right standing with God comes by our obedience to the law, which circumcision represents, then Christ died for no purpose." This is one way of stating the only Gospel. There is no gospel that comes by circumcision, no gospel that comes by the law, no gospel that comes by anything but faith in Jesus Christ.

With Galatians 2:21, Paul finishes the foundation of this Epistle. He has established his authority, revealed the double-mindedness of James, Peter, John, and Barnabas, and stated the gospel of grace in a nutshell (Galatians 2:21).

### **Chapter Three**

In the beginning of Chapter Three, Paul addresses himself to the Galatians. In the first two chapters, Paul addresses himself only indirectly to them. He says in Galatians 3:1, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you...." The Greek word translated foolish in this passage is *anoetos*. It literally means, failure to use your minds to understand the finer things. It reflects the fickleness of the Gauls who settled Galatia.

"Who hath bewitched you?" Paul continues. The word bewitched in the Greek is *baskaino*. It is a word used when talking about the evil eye of witchcraft. The

Galatians were not persuaded but deceived by powers equivalent to witchcraft. And all of this deception happened to them while they knew that Jesus Christ had been crucified for them.

Galatians 3:3 spells it out, "...having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" The obvious answer is no. But it is not such an obvious thing in practical application. We are so eager to do things ourselves and thereby depart from the Gospel of grace that Paul is writing about. Often it is far easier it seems, to try to work things out ourselves than to trust in the grace power of God to work things out. It may appear to be a problem peculiar to the Galatian churches, but we must constantly be aware, lest we to, having begun in the Spirit attempt to become perfect by works of the flesh.

In Galatians 3:6 Paul introduces the concept of righteousness for the first time. The righteousness that is included here is that right standing spirit-to-Spirit relationship with God that does not come by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. This is the righteousness which Paul speaks so much of in the Letter to the Romans, which we will review in a later chapter of this book. "...Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." It was counted unto Abraham for right standing with God.

In the balance of Chapter Three, Paul talks about Abraham and the law. I am sure he brings up Abraham, because the Judaizing Christians referred to Abraham to justify the doctrine of circumcision. Paul countered their argument by pointing out that Abraham's relationship with God was by faith and circumcision was an outward sign of that faith relationship. In other words, circumcision is not a means to a relationship with God, but an outward sign of that faith relationship.

In verse nine, Paul relates that those who have faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Believers have a relationship with God by faith just like Abraham did, and they will receive the same promise that Abraham received because of their faith in God.

In verse ten Paul points out that all who are living under law are under the curse of the law if they fail to obey but one point of the law. No man can have a right relationship with God by the works of the law, but by faith alone.

Verse twelve reports, "And the law is not of faith...." This simply means that the law and faith are two mutually exclusive things. Law and faith cannot and do not mix. They are like oil and water; they separate from one another. Consequently, the man that chooses to do the law must always live under the law. He chooses to have a relationship with God on the basis of his obedience to the law, which no man can have, or he chooses to have a relationship with God on the basis of faith.

Paul quickly points out in Galatians 3:13, 14, that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...." This simply means that because Christ received the curse (which we deserved; He did not deserve), we

are purchased away from the curse of the law. As a result, as we walk by faith if we do not do what the law would have demanded of us, we are not cursed. This sounds like a license to continue in sin, but that is not possible. The key between walking in faith but missing it, and believing we are walking in faith but knowingly disobey is simply the attitude of the heart. We cannot deceive God. We can only walk in faith with a pure heart, a pure motive.

People like the Judaizing Christians do not consider this. They find their security in the outward obedience to the law. They are afraid to trust in a sincere open-hearted relationship with God. We all know that we can obey the law and have our heart far from God. God is not interested in obedience. He is interested in your heart. God knows that if you will give Him your heart, He will have your obedience. God also knows that you can obey without giving God your heart.

Paul continues then to talk about the covenant between God and Abraham. He explains to the Galatians who had been deceived into thinking that they had to be circumcised, that the covenant promise was not to all of Abraham's heirs or seeds (plural), but to one particular heir or seed (singular). That was Christ. The law did not come until 430 years after the covenant, so the promises to Abraham were not of the law, but of the covenant. So the covenant promise was to Christ. If we are to be partakers of those promises, we must put our faith in Christ. The law never gave any promises before Christ, and the law gives no promises after Christ. The promises of God came only by the covenant and Christ has now given us a new covenant through His shed blood. Faith in that shed blood will produce the promises for us because we now enter into that covenant of Christ through faith.

In verse eighteen, Paul explains that the inheritance cannot come by the law and the covenant. The covenant came first by some 430 years. With the covenant came promises. The law came after the covenant and gave no promises nor did it take away any promises. If anything comes by the law, it is not a promise but a reward. Paul therefore concludes that the promise cannot come by the covenant and the law as the Judaizers claimed. The promise can come only by the covenant, and that can only be entered into by faith in Jesus Christ.

Let me try to help your understanding by saying it this way. There is a difference between a covenant and a contract (law). The contract (the law) says, "If you will do this I will do that. If you do not do this, I do not have to do that." It is the same for all contracts. One of the legal conditions for determining if something really is a contract or not is to determine if both parties of the contract had a required performance. A contract is a relationship based upon performance. If the performance is not met, the relationship can legally be broken. If you do not build the building, I do not have to pay you, etc.

A covenant is somewhat different, but many men have not distinguished between covenant and contract. A covenant is simply an agreement to be in relationship with one another, independent of performance. The single word of covenant is love. Love is a relationship word. It speaks of counting others valuable and

precious in the sight of God and in one another's sight. Abraham and God had a covenant relationship. Out of this relationship came a performance. God promised Abraham many children, as many as the sands of the sea and the stars of the sky. Abraham simply recognized God as the One and only God, his heavenly Father.

Paul was trying to explain to the Galatians what a true covenant relationship was; for you see, the Judaizing Christians were trying to say that the Galatians could not have a relationship with God unless they obeyed. Paul was saying that once that covenant relationship was entered into through faith in Jesus Christ, the obedience would come.

If that is so, why was the law added? Verse nineteen points this out. It was given because of transgressions until Christ would come, to whom the promise was made. It was ordained by the mediator, Moses. Moses was the mediator between God and his people to establish a contract of law. Verse twenty tells us that a mediator is between two parties, but God is just one. This means that God alone established the covenant with Abraham.

Yet the law is not against the promises of God, verse twenty-one reminds us. If there had been a law given that would have brought life, righteousness, which gives the life of the spirit according to Romans 8:10, would have come by obedience to the law. The law was not against the promises; it just never permitted us to obtain them since no one ever qualified through obedience.

This brings us to verse twenty-four. The King James Version says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." First, let me point out that the King James translators inserted the phrase "to bring us." In the Greek it would read, "wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." To insert the phrase "to bring us" implies that the law had some purpose or value to reveal Christ to us. We all know that this is not true. We did not find Christ by obedience to the law, nor did our disobedience reveal Christ to us or even convict us of our sin. The Greek implies: "...the law was our schoolmaster until Christ came...."

The Greek word translated schoolmaster in this verse is *paidagogos*. It does not mean teacher. The Greek word *didaskalos* is normally used to mean teacher in the Greek. The Greek word *paidagogos* refers to a Greek slave who was entrusted with the moral supervision of a child. Today we would call the Greek *paidagogos* a baby sitter. The schoolmaster's primary duty is not to teach, but to protect from harm and keep out of trouble, to guard.

Therefore the Kaiser Emphasized Version for Galatians 3:24 should read: "Wherefore the law was our baby sitter until Christ came, who would provide a justification by faith." As we enter into our relationship of righteousness by faith, we are no longer under the baby sitter of the law, for we have become children in direct relationship with God the Father.

Therefore, as many of us who have become children of God by faith in Christ, have immersed in Christ and have put on Christ. Because we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed; Christ is the only seed of Abraham, and we are in Christ. Because we are Abraham's seed in Christ, we are heirs of the promise that was given to the seed (singular) of Abraham. We cannot partake of the promise through the law, since the law will not bring us into Christ. We partake of the promise by entering into Christ to whom the promise was only given.

## **Chapter Four**

As we interpret and apply Galatians 4:1, 2, we use it to justify the application of the law to baby Christians. "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." As we read on to verse four and five we find that these first two verses cannot be applied to Christians, for the context is truly one of people of Israel living under a guardian (baby sitter); "But when the fullness of 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."

The contrast that Paul is making is not between baby Christians who have not yet learned to walk in faith, as contrasted to mature Christians that have learned to walk in faith. The context of this contrast is people who are not born again, as contrasted with those who have been born again and therefore are living by faith.

Now that we are in Christ, born again, we are sons, and since we are sons, then we are heirs of God through Christ. In Galatians 4:9 Paul exhorts the Galatians who had been deceived to add circumcision to their faith, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak a beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" He is asking them, "Why have you returned to bondage through accepting this deception of circumcision?"

Looking at Galatians, Chapter Four, verses eleven through twenty, Paul appeals to them from an emotional and personal approach. Paul is doing everything to win them back to the only gospel. He works on their intellect through a lengthy discourse about the law, and then he turns to an emotional and personal appeal.

Starting in verse twenty-one, Paul tells them a story about Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was the first son by Hagar, but not Abraham's "promised son." Ishmael was Abraham's "do it yourself son." Isaac, however, was the child of promise through barren Sarah, the child of faith. He was born after the spirit. Ishmael was born after the flesh. He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit. And so it is today. Those who trust in the law for their righteousness still persecute those who are trusting by faith for their righteousness. Sometimes it seems far easier to "do it yourself" for God. But God only gets pleasure out of our trusting in Him to bring the promised fruit to pass.



## Chapter Five

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty," Paul exhorts in Galatians 5:1. If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. If you trust in the law, if you are circumcised, you are fallen from grace. Then Paul extends his reasoning to say that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything; but faith which worketh by love. The issue is not being for or against any act of the law, but being for faith in God through Christ.

In verse thirteen, Paul tempers this great message of liberty by saying, "...only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Paul is not talking about a message of freedom from the law just for the sake of doing what we want to do regardless of what God wants done. Paul is talking about a liberty from the law that sets us free from our own selfish motivations, sets us free to serve others in selfless love. All of the law can be expressed in one word, LOVE, as Paul expresses in verse fourteen, "...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

How can we live this life of love? The answer is simple according to Paul. Walk in the Spirit, and you will avoid selfishness. The flesh and the spirit will lust against one another because they are contrary to one another as faith is contrary to the law. This warfare will keep you from doing what you want to do. But as you walk after the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Paul then proceeds to define the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit that we might discern between the flesh and the Spirit.

### FLESH

1. adultery
2. fornication
3. uncleanness
4. lasciviousness
5. idolatry
6. witchcraft
7. hatred
8. variance
9. emulations
10. wrath
11. strife
12. seditions
13. heresies
14. envyings
15. murders
16. drunkenness
17. revellings

### SPIRIT

1. love
2. joy
3. peace
4. longsuffering
5. gentleness
6. goodness
7. faith
8. meekness
9. temperance

## Chapter Six

Paul concludes this letter to the deceived Galatians with some very practical advice, after having laid a foundation of doctrinal understanding of NO OTHER GOSPEL. Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." I imagine that Paul thought that some would take his exhortation of correction and become self righteous, correcting others with a heavy hand. He cautions them not to do that. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2).

Paul continues, "Let every man prove his own work... every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word" stay in fellowship with those who taught them, that they continue in good doctrine.

In verses seven through nine, we read a more familiar passage; "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Many times I have heard ministers use this as a corrective verse, "Do not deceive yourself, if you mock God, God will punish you." This is true, but the Galatians were not mocking God. It was the Judaizing Christians who were mocking God by their insistence upon circumcision. They had sowed to the flesh by teaching that one could approach God through fleshly circumcision. Paul was saying, they would reap what they had sowed. On the positive side, Paul says, if you sow to the Spirit by faith in Christ alone, you will reap of the Spirit.

Paul encouraged the Galatian Christians not to be weary in their well doing. His message was: "In due season you shall reap, if ye faint not. Keep on doing good to all men, especially those of the household of faith."

In Galatians 6:11, Paul appears to close the letter, but takes one last shot at making his point. In verse thirteen, he says, "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law...that they may glory" in the fact that they persuaded you to become circumcised, but I (Paul) glory only in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, Paul starts concluding Galatians with verse fifteen; "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

Then the final sentence pronounces the opening blessing once again, "...the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

## **Summary**

Paul wrote this letter of exhortation and correction to the Christians of Galatia who were easily swayed because of their emotional temperament. He revealed in conclusive terms the deception of adding circumcision and the works of the law to the only Gospel of grace which comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ only. Although we are not Galatians, and we may not be of like emotional temperament, we should take heed, lest we add to the only Gospel of grace by

attempting to approach God on the basis of our works or traditions outside of faith from our own hearts. Oh, it is far easier to live by the law than by faith, for we can obey the law while our heart may be far from God. But God did not sacrifice His only Son for us to fall back into religious tradition or the dead letter of the law. God sent His only begotten Son that we might have eternal life, by grace through faith.

# Chapter 11

## First Corinthians

### Time and Place

The first letter to the Corinthian church was written from Ephesus as most authorities agree. It was written during the two year stay of Paul at Ephesus during that third missionary journey. It was probably written before the letter to the Galatians, but we review it here after the Galatian letter so that we might review both the first and second letter to the Corinthian church without interruption.

On his second journey Paul visited the Macedonian churches at Thessalonica, Philippi, and Berea before moving south to Athens, and then on to neighboring Corinth, where he once again suffered persecution.

While in Ephesus during this third journey, Paul received reports about division and immorality in the church at Corinth, so he writes this first stern letter of correction to them.

Remember, Paul was born again when he was about thirty, and now he is writing this letter in his early fifties.

Read First Corinthians before continuing to read this summary.

### Chapter One

Paul opens Chapter One, with a statement of his apostolic authority, and then he continues with a positive statement that he is writing to saints, not to sinners, even though he would have been justified to call them such. He then blesses them with "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

From verses four through nine he brags on them and their faithfulness.

In verse ten Paul begins to exhort them with strong words, and in verse eleven he says "that there are contentions among you." Division was the problem in Corinth.

### Why Division?

We must remember that the Corinthians were Greeks. The Greeks were noted for their philosophy. Today we would call them intellectuals. Their intellect was very active in the things of God, so active that it got them in trouble. They were so concerned about who had ministered to them that they were dividing themselves according to whom they belonged. I need not remind you who have any experience in the church of Jesus Christ that this is still a problem today. Intellectual differences are still the source of division today. Of course, Paul was well acquainted with intellectualism.

We, however, cannot lay down our intellect for the sake of unity and allow any doctrine or intellectual interpretation of the things of God have free course in the church. Paul demonstrated this by his strong doctrinal letter to the Galatians churches.

This would seem to put us in a dilemma. How can we maintain a standard of understanding without making it a source of division? Can we allow freedom of interpretation without generating division? Paul begins to deal with this problem in verse seventeen.

Paul declares that he was not sent to baptize or to preach with the wisdom of words, that is, natural wisdom of philosophy. He was sent to preach the Cross of Christ. That preaching is foolishness to those who are not born again, but are perishing. That preaching is the power of God to those who are born again. He then quotes Isaiah 29:14, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." (Verse 19) In God's wisdom, men find Him by the foolishness of preaching rather than by their own wisdom. This pleases God.

Paul writes, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (Verses 22-24) Paul knows that he is writing to Greeks and he is making his point. Do not seek God through your own wisdom or philosophy. As the Jews tried to add the sign of circumcision to the Galatian Christians, now the Greeks are trying to add their own wisdom to the Gospel.

Paul then goes on to explain that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men. God chooses the base or simple people, the "nobodies" of this world to glorify Himself, so that no flesh, talent, or carnal strength can take pride in finding God. Paul told the Galatians that religious works would not bring favor with God. Now Paul tells the Greek Christians that natural wisdom or talent will bring favor with God.

Chapter One is concluded with a positive statement about the Corinthian Christians, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according

as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Yes, wisdom is good, but only the wisdom that is found in Christ. Christ is our wisdom. Christ is our righteousness. Christ is our sanctification. Christ is our redemption. This is contrary to our natural mind, but it is superior Truth.

Our natural mind says Christ gives us wisdom. Christ gives us righteousness. Christ gives us sanctification. Christ gives us redemption. Yes, this is also true. But the greater truth is that Christ is our wisdom. He is our righteousness, etc. It is the Christ of God that dwells in us who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Paul is not talking about mental wisdom, but spirit-realm wisdom that comes to us by the Spirit of Christ that dwells in us. It is wisdom from above, not intellectual ability. It is only operative in us as we walk after the Spirit, and deny the flesh.

## **Chapter Two**

Paul continues to talk about wisdom in order to explain to the philosophical Greeks that the wisdom he speaks of is not worldly wisdom but wisdom of God. He was determined not to know anything among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul explains that natural men cannot know the mind of Christ. Paul claims that is not carnal but has the mind of Christ.

## **Chapter Three**

In Chapter Three Paul speaks very plainly, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk...For ye are yet carnal...." Then Paul plainly tells them they are carnal because "envying, strife," and divisions is among them.

Paul explains that some plant, some water, and God gives the increase. Carnal men claim their fruitfulness, but spiritual men have faith that God keeps account of works and rewards accordingly. The only foundation that anyone can lay is Jesus Christ. When one builds upon this foundation, even though tried as with fire, it will be proven.

Then Paul exhorts to the Corinthians that they are the temple of God and have been built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. He instructs them not defile the temple of God, lest God destroy them. Paul's theme is: Do not be deceived. God does not accept carnal wisdom.

## **Chapter Four**

Chapter Four is devoted to a dissertation of apostleship. In the eyes of the world, apostles are foolish, weak, and despised. They are hungry, thirsty, and naked, with no certain dwelling place, laboring with their own hands. Yet while the apostles are reviled, they bless; while they are persecuted, they endure. They are looked upon as the filth of the world. Paul explains that he does not write these things to their shame, but to show that he is not just another of some ten

thousand possible teachers, that he is a Father who has begotten them through the Gospel.

Paul tells the Corinthians that Timothy will come to remind them of what they were taught about Christ and that he would shortly join them.

This reminds me of the emotional appeal which Paul made to the Thessalonians in his first letter to them. Paul would use any righteous means at his disposal to persuade men to follow Christ, to follow NO OTHER GOSPEL.

## **Chapter Five**

In this passage Paul makes a direct frontal attack on the Corinthians (a paraphrase of its content): It is common knowledge that there is fornication among you Christians that is not even common among the unbelieving gentiles, and you are too proud to repent. My judgment and sentence upon that one is this. Deliver him to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

A little sin will spread through the whole church like a little leaven spreads through bread dough. Get it out for the sake of purity. Do not fellowship with fornicators, or with extortioners, or with idolaters.

## **Chapter Six**

Apparently there were disputes among the Christians that they were taking into the worldly courts to be settled. Here again they were turning to the wisdom of the world rather than the wisdom of God. They who were born again put greater confidence in the wisdom of men than in the wisdom of God.

Paul turns to a strong exhortation about their bodies. He tells them to keep their bodies set apart unto God, for "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost... and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (Verses 19, 20)

## **Chapter Seven**

Chapter Seven is devoted to a more positive instruction of the proper use of the body in marriage. In essence Paul is telling the Corinthians: You can chose to live in celibacy; but if that is not your choice, take one wife and stay with her.

Note carefully in this passage that Paul clearly distinguishes between what the Lord says from what he says.

If one of the Brethren has an unbelieving wife, she may depart from him. But if she chooses to stay with him, he should allow it. The same is true for a believing woman with an unbelieving husband.

Paul then gives some instruction about staying where they were when they were born again. He tells them: If you were married, stay married. If you were uncircumcised, remain uncircumcised. If you were a slave, you are the Lord's freeman. If you are free, you are the Lord's servant.

Even more detailed instruction is given concerning virgins. It must have seemed necessary for Paul to give such teaching, since there was apparent lack of understanding of the proper use of their bodies among the Corinthian Christians.

## **Chapter Eight**

"Now as touching things offered unto idols...." is Paul's next subject of address to the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 8:1). There must have been some question about whether they could eat things offered to idols. Paul basically says, it makes no difference to God, but if it causes your brethren to stumble because they do not understand your liberty, then do not eat it. To cause them to stumble would be a sin against them, and therefore against God. Not because you ate the meat of idols but because you caused someone else to stumble and fall away from the Lord.

## **Chapter Nine**

Now that the question of liberty has been brought up, Paul defends his liberty in Christ. With this comes the question of Paul's support. He defends his right to be supported by the preaching of the Gospel. The same is true today as was true with the carnal Corinthians. The world thinks that ministers of the Gospel do not work. Yet, although he had the right to be supported by the preaching of the Gospel, Paul did not exercise his right and supported himself. He did this that he might not offend any man. He remained all things to all men. To the Jews, he was a Jew. To those under the law, he came under the law that he might gain them that were under the law. He did this to discipline his body, to keep it under subjection, lest he should preach to others and become a cast away himself.

## **Chapter Ten**

Here Paul explains why he keeps his body in subjection. Their Fathers escaped from Egypt with Moses and all partook of the same spiritual blessing and provision that God gave them. Yet God was not pleased with many of them and left them in the wilderness. They are an example to us, that we should not lust after evil things, should not be idolaters, should not commit fornication, nor tempt Christ, or murmur. I hesitate to point out that murmuring is in the list with fornication and idolatry, but I guess I just did. God help us to not murmur.

Let me forewarn you that Chapter Ten is leading up to the chapter of communion instruction, which we so frequently read when taking communion. This precedes Chapter Twelve, on the gifts of the spirit, followed by the Love Chapter (thirteen), and then Chapter Fourteen, the gifts operating in the church. Keep your mind on this sequence as we review these chapters.



In Chapter Ten, Paul continues to talk about proper use of the body from the subject of working, to fornication, and idols. Then he directs their attention to the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in verse sixteen. Instead of eating of things sacrificed to idols, eat of the one true sacrifice, the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not have communion with devils by eating things sacrificed to idols, but have communion with God by eating of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is lawful for men to eat of anything they choose, but it is not always expedient; it is not always good. Nevertheless, do not make a law out of what you do or do not eat. If you are invited to eat with someone, eat what is set before you. The important thing in judging what to eat is that you do not become a stumbling block to others. Do not allow your faith to offend others' conscience.

## **Chapter Eleven**

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ," Paul says to open Chapter Eleven. (Remember chapters were added about A. D. 1500.) This he says to encourage them to obey his teaching about the proper use of the body. He goes on to explain that God is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of men. A man is the head of his woman or wife.

Then comes that notorious passage about head coverings and women's hair length. Men, when you pray take your hat off, for Christ is your covering and you are in the image and glory of God, Paul teaches. Women, however, should have their head covered, for she is the glory of man. When one goes into God's presence by praying or prophesying, we are there to glorify God not oneself. Woman is made to glorify man, therefore, man's glory. Woman should be covered in the presence of God. (This is what Paul is trying to teach.)

The present cultural church has completely misinterpreted this passage many times. First Corinthians 11:6 clearly says that if a woman's hair is not covered it should be cut. But if it is a shame to be cut, then let a woman cover her hair. In certain present day churches, just the opposite is done, believing they are following Biblical instruction. They encourage the women to let their hair grow long and wave it in great styles upon their head, thinking this glorifies God. If a woman has her hair neatly trimmed and styled, they claim it to be worldly and insist on it being covered with a head scarf, prudishly tied under their chin. This is completely opposite the instructions of Paul to the Corinthian church.

Apparently the Greek women were very style conscious, especially about hair. They would come together to commune with God but spend their time talking about and comparing hair styles. Whether we are men or women, the purpose of going into the house of God should not be to show off the latest fashion of hair or clothing, but to pray and have communion with God.

When they fellowshipped, they not only compared styles but also got drunk.

In verse eighteen Paul says, "when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you...." When you come together for the Lord's supper, you get drunk. The Corinthians in their philosophical approach to God, although they were born again, were indulging in bodily satisfactions.

Then Paul writes the familiar communion instructions. They were not discerning the Lord's body, but only pacifying their own bodies when they came together. They were going through the ritual but forgetting the purpose of it.

I pray that the present day church will never take communion so lightly.

## **Chapter Twelve**

Paul then turns his attention to spirituals, or operations of the spirit which is translated in the King James Version, "gifts of the spirit." He starts with the obvious. A man who speaks by the Spirit does not call Jesus accursed or anathema. Also, no man can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

In verse twelve, Paul explains that as the body has many members, but is one, so also is the body of Christ. He is taking advantage of the Corinthians' obvious interest in body-realm things to teach about the Spirit. Jesus did this same kind of thing by teaching through parables.

I am sure Paul is writing this way to help them understand that differences should not produce division, but fullness of operation of the body of Christ.

Paul closes Chapter Twelve by clearly saying, "...ye are the body of Christ...." And then he lists the spiritual functions or offices in the church: apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, and diversities. One person does not do all, but we should desire the best gift in our ministry.

I have not given attention to teach about the gifts of the spirit here because Paul was using gifts of the spirit only to illustrate the spiritual variety as contrasted to body-realm variety. I believe in the operations of the gifts of the Spirit, but will not deal with them in this book.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

Chapter Thirteen is known as the Love Chapter. It is the meat between the bread of Chapters Twelve and Fourteen. Often the Love Chapter is put in contrast to the gifts of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit operating in the church. It should not be. Love is the oil that lubricates the operations of the Holy Spirit. Love is also the glue that keeps the operations of the Holy Spirit close to the church.

Remember, this is a letter dealing with the Corinthians' body-realm emphasis and the resulting division. Paul has written much about proper use of the body. Then

he explains the proper use of the Spiritual operations using proper body-realm operations as an example.

Now in Chapter Thirteen, Paul says, without love even the gifts of the Spirit will engender pride and bring division. Love never faileth.

He closes the chapter by saying in loving terms, "grow up." Do not be childish and divided.

## **Chapter Fourteen**

Follow love, and desire spiritual gifts, is the beginning of Chapter Fourteen. It is best to prophesy in the church. If you speak in tongues with love, make sure an interpretation is available through you or someone else. When you bring a message in tongues, make it a clear confident sound.

Paul continues to clarify the use of the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues in the church. This instruction is given for the purpose of overcoming the division among the Corinthians.

## **Chapter Fifteen**

Chapter Fifteen contains more doctrine than any previous chapter. Knowing the emphasis of the Corinthians on the body realm, Paul emphasizes the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ as part of the Gospel of grace. He reviews how Jesus Christ was seen of various groups after the resurrection. Apparently some were saying there was no bodily resurrection. They obviously were influenced by the Sadducees, who did not believe in the bodily resurrection or life after death.

Paul plainly says in verse seventeen, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins." But now Christ is risen from the dead. Because of that, those who believe on Him shall also be resurrected.

The intellectual Corinthians would ask, "If the dead are raised, how does it happen?" Paul then goes on to explain how it can happen by talking about different kinds of flesh. With that illustration he hopes to get them to see that Christ had a glorified flesh that was different than mortal flesh.

In verses fifty-two through fifty-seven, Paul explains how this will happen "in the twinkling of an eye." This verse sounds like First Thessalonians 4:16-17 which Paul wrote from Corinth to Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. I am sure he taught this to the Corinthians on his first visit to them. Therefore, this phrase in verse fifty-three, "in the twinkling of an eye," is just a reminder of what will happen to their bodies.

## **Chapter Sixteen**

Chapter Sixteen is a closing chapter. Paul is telling them to take a weekly collection for the saints of Jerusalem. He sends greetings from Aquila and Priscilla, whom Paul met in Corinth, but were in Ephesus when Paul wrote the Book of First Corinthians.

## **Summary**

First Corinthians is a letter of correction to the church that was divided because they were body-realm conscious rather than spirit-realm conscious. It is interesting that the present charismatic church emphasizes only Chapters Eleven through Fourteen: communion, gifts of the spirit, love, and gifts operating in the church. Few people realize that the purpose of these spiritual chapters were to heal divisions resulting from their body- realm emphasis. It is amusing but sad to realize that as Paul intended to bring unity to the Corinthian church, today his message brings division. The present day body of Christ must be body-realm conscious as were the Corinthians.

# Chapter 12

## Second Corinthians

### Time And Place

Second Corinthians was written by Paul from Macedonia while on his third missionary journey. He had left Ephesus where he had spent two years and written both First Corinthians and probably the Galatian Letter.

In Macedonia, Paul met Titus and received a report of how the First Letter was received. Paul's tone in the Second Letter is somewhat softened from that of the first. Apparently the Corinthians had accepted the instructions of First Corinthians.

### Chapter One

Paul again opens by declaring his apostolic authority of Jesus Christ, addressing himself to Corinth and all the saints in the region of Achaia. He pronounces his blessing that is common to his letters, "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

He proceeds then to speak of God comforting us in all our tribulation. Apparently as God had spared Paul's life in Asia, Paul was made him even more aware that he lived daily trusting in the resurrection power of God. He may have been referring to the beating and stoning incidents of his earlier journeys.

Paul then exclaims the virtues of God and His promises. Second Corinthians 1:20 says that "...all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen...." The "in him" means in Christ, for Christ has established us, anointed us, sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

### Chapter Two

Reason is then given why he did not come to them earlier: he did not want to make them sorry or sad. And then follows an explanation and mild apology for his previous stern letter.

In verse ten Paul tells them that who you forgive, I forgive. If we do not forgive, we give satan an edge. But thank God, Who causes us to triumph.

## **Chapter Three**

In Chapter Three Paul says that he does not ask for a letter of commendation to or from them. The Corinthians are written on Paul's heart. The Corinthians are the message of Christ ministered by Paul. Not a message of the dead letter but a message of the living Spirit. If the dead letter of the law gave Moses so much glory that his face had to be covered, how much more is the ministry of the living Spirit glorious.

Where the Spirit is Lord there is liberty, liberty for us to be changed from glory to glory.

It seems to me that Paul is somewhat saying, "What I wrote previously was a bit harsh and legalistic. Relax, and let the Holy Spirit produce the needed changes in your life."

## **Chapter Four**

Paul declares he has "delivered the goods" of the Gospel and pronounces that "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." The god of this world, namely satan, has kept the lost from seeing the light. Nevertheless, we preach Christ Jesus as Lord.

But this Good News Truth is as a treasure in a clay vessel. Once again Paul refers to the body realm to capture their understanding and lists problems of living in the body-realm world.

Paul closes Chapter Four by directing the attention to God who raised up the Lord Jesus. He will also raise us up. Therefore, we faint not for temporary problems. We are to keep our eyes on the spirit-realm unseen things, for they are eternal.

## **Chapter Five**

The fifth chapter of Second Corinthians is most remembered for the marvelous statement, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." And concluding the chapter, "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."

In this chapter Paul talks about looking forward to putting off his body to be present with the Lord. Since Christ died for us, even though we are in this body, we should live for Him; because we are new creatures, we are the righteousness of God in Christ.

## **Chapter Six**

Being the righteousness of God in Christ, one should work together with Him, so as not to receive the grace of God in vain.

Following is the long list of things Paul has endured to preach the Gospel and prove the grace of God. Read the list from verses four through nine, of Chapter Six.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Why does Paul insert this idea? In plain words, to preach the Gospel in this body of flesh is hard enough, but when one is joined with an unbeliever, it is even more difficult. So come out from among unbelievers.

## **Chapter Seven**

For this reason, knowing the problems and temptations of living among the worldly, do all that possible to separate yourselves and live a holy life. There are great promises to lay hold of as we abide in cleanness.

By this time we clearly see that Paul is really taking the positive approach to the Corinthian problem in this Second Letter.

The balance of this chapter relates Paul's comfort from the good report of the Corinthian repentance, even though he is yet in the midst of tribulation.

## **Chapter Eight**

In this chapter Paul stirs up the Corinthians to extend grace toward the Macedonians in the way of liberal offerings. Part of his motivation is found in Second Corinthians 8:9, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Many interpret this verse as spiritual poverty and riches, but the context of it is clearly that of monetary poverty and riches.

Paul closes this passage by recommending to them Titus as his partner and fellowhelper toward them.

## **Chapter Nine**

Paul continues in Chapter Nine on the subject of the ministry and finances. Here he gives instruction about their sowing and reaping, their giving and receiving. In verse ten he encourages them, "he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness."

## **Chapter Ten**

Here Paul defines warfare. It is not after the flesh, but it is a warfare of the spirit. Likewise, the weapons of "warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the

pulling down of strong holds." The warfare is obviously in the mind, for Paul instructs the Corinthians to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." The obedience that is called for here is not an obedience of works or actions, but an even more important obedience of thought. In this I hear echoing the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5). As you remember, Jesus continually took the disciples from outward obedience which the law required, to an inward purity of thought in His teaching. The law says not to commit adultery, but Jesus said that looking on a woman to lust after her is adultery committed in the heart.

## **Chapter Eleven**

In this passage Paul speaks highly of the Corinthian brethren. He is confident that if someone comes and preaches "another Jesus...or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted," be patient with them. Remember, when Paul referred to this kind of problem in the Book of Galatians, he recommended that they be regarded accursed or an anathema. Paul definitely takes a softer tone in this epistle. It is important to note however, that Paul implies that there is definitely NO OTHER GOSPEL with this statement.

## **Chapter Twelve**

This chapter contains two memorable passages of significance. One is his report of knowing a man (who may well have been himself as some authorities believe) who was caught up to the third heaven some fourteen years earlier. What a glorious experience! Paul chooses not to glory in such experiences, but rather in his infirmities.

This brings us to the second memorable passage, Second Corinthians 12:7-10, of Paul's thorn in the flesh. Many books have been written on this subject and some authors apparently did not read the last part of verse seven. The thorn in the flesh is simply a messenger sent from satan, not sent from God. Some surmise that the thorn in the flesh was blindness or other afflictions, but the Bible does not say that is the case. Verse nine gives us God's reply to Paul's prayer, "My grace is sufficient for thee...." Some interpret this verse to mean that God would not help Paul, for God knew that Paul could struggle through. That however, is not a proper understanding of the grace of God. Grace is God's willingness to use his power on our behalf; grace is the operative power of God. God, therefore, is answering Paul with "Do not worry, Paul, my power is sufficient, and it is resident in you in Christ Jesus." Therefore Paul explains that he will glory in God even though he has weaknesses. While Paul is in these weaknesses, the grace power of God is manifest, and this gives glory to God. When Paul was weak, he knew God would strengthen him and therefore be glorified. In any case, Paul will be taken from weakness to strength—from his weakness to God's strength. This is so simple that it is hard to understand how some can make it so complicated. Many times it is implied that we should seek to



be weak to glorify God. No. You cannot and should not test or blackmail God. But when you find yourself unintentionally in trouble, God will bail you out. Praise God!

## **Chapter Thirteen**

This is the closing chapter of this Second Epistle to the Corinthians. In it Paul simply confirms his determination to come to them and closes with a prayer.

### **Summary**

This second Letter to the Corinthian believers is obviously a milder tone than his first Epistle to them. That is partly because they received the exhortation from the first Letter and repented. It is also partly due to Paul himself, who determined to somewhat apologize for the first Letter and repent from his harshness with a more positive approach to their temptations.

Let us not forget, however, that Paul wrote both of these letters to Christians who had been saved out of Greek philosophy and were highly developed intellectuals. Their intellectual approach to the Gospel brought disputations about the right doctrine and consequently divisions. The answer Paul sent to them was to put off carnal wisdom, and put on the wisdom of God. He told them to stop giving so much attention to the body, things of the body, and the material realm. They were to direct their attention to things of the Spirit, gifts of the Spirit operating through love, if they were going to glorify God with unity and power. Yet in all of this, Paul maintained that there is NO OTHER GOSPEL than that he brought to them. He exhorted to be loving and patient with one if he brings another gospel.

How applicable this is to the church today! Emphasis is on the gifts of the Spirit. This should bring unity in the Body of Christ; instead, we find ourselves divided over them, because we have approached the gifts with carnal wisdom rather than Spiritual wisdom. The very Letter which Paul intended to bring unity now brings division by our carnality. God be merciful to us in our carnal strength and spiritual weakness.

# Chapter 13

## Romans

### Time And Place

The epistle to the Romans was written by Paul from Corinth during his third missionary journey, before returning to Jerusalem.

While on his second missionary journey, he wrote the first two of his epistles from Corinth back to the Thessalonians. Then, on his third journey, he wrote back to the Galatians from Ephesus, as well as two letters to the Corinthians. Finally, arriving in Corinth on his third journey, he wrote this magnificent teaching letter to the Romans.

### Roman Character

Paul learned of the character of the Romans in two ways. One source was his acquaintance with the Roman conquerors as they occupied the known world of that day including Jerusalem and Judea, where Paul was trained, lived, and served in Jewish leadership. He was in Jerusalem when the Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross.

The other source by which Paul was knowledgeable about the Romans was his friendship with Aquila and Priscilla. He first met them in Corinth after they had been exiled from Rome by Caesar Augustus. They traveled to Ephesus as Paul returned from his second missionary journey, and Paul was with them again in Ephesus as they ministered together for two years during his third missionary journey. Through these years with Aquila and Priscilla, surely they told Paul much about the Christians in Rome. We must not forget that Paul himself was a Roman citizen.

These two sources of knowledge enabled Paul to realize that the spirit of the Romans, the world's greatest law givers and organizers in that time, was finding its way into the hearts and minds of the Roman Christians. Paul dealt with circumcision and religious law that invaded the Galatian church. He dealt with the Greek philosophy and intellectualism which invaded the hearts and minds of the Corinthian Christians. With that background, he was well equipped to deal with the problems of legal thinking which invaded the Christians at Rome.

So Paul wrote this epistle to the Romans from Corinth, midway through his third journey, more than twenty years after his conversion at the age of 52 to 54 years.

Romans is a long and detailed letter, because Paul had no occasion to visit the Roman church in person and present the Gospel in the detailed fashion that he had at the Galatian churches and the other cities.

## **Chapter One**

Paul opens this letter, not with the declaration of his apostolic authority, but with the statement that he is "a servant of Jesus Christ." He sets forth Jesus Christ as the Seed of David in the natural, and as the Son of God, according to the spirit of holiness and the resurrection from the dead. And Paul states with even greater support, "by whom we have received grace and apostleship."

Paul concludes this introduction with his familiar blessing, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

In verse sixteen, Paul directly addresses the point that prevails throughout the entire letter. The Gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation," for in this one and only Gospel is found right standing with God. By implication Paul is saying that relationship with God is not by the law. Remember the Romans were great law givers, and great in their authority establishment. The Galatians were invaded by religious ritual and circumcision. The Corinthians were invaded by philosophy and body-realm influence. Paul addresses the Roman Christians who were being influenced by the traditional thinking of the value of authority and right relationship by obedience to the law.

In verse nineteen, Paul begins his support of righteousness by faith. He goes back to the basics. Things which are seen reflect the character of the invisible things, even the character of the Creator God. Therefore, there is no excuse. They knew God by this creation but did not give God credit for it. As a result of their building corruptible idols to worship, God gave them over to unrighteousness. They began to worship creation rather than the Creator.

Paul closes Chapter One with a very strong declaration of the nature of man without God. In a single word, man is described as "sin", but Paul gives a detailed list:

unrighteousness haters, if God, fornication despiteful, wickedness, proud, covetousness, boasters, maliciousness inventors of evil things, full of envy, disobedient to parents, murder, without understanding, debate, covenant-breakers, deceit, without natural affection, malignity, implacable, whisperers, unmerciful, backbiters

## **Chapter Two**

Judgment is the subject of this chapter. You cannot judge others while sinning yourself. God "will render to every man according to his deeds." (Verse six) Self-righteousness does not fool God. Knowledge or ignorance of the law makes no difference. If one sins while they do not know the law, they will be judged for violating their own conscience. If someone sins knowing the law, they will be judged for violating the law.

Apparently, some Romans had been teaching obedience to their law, but not practicing it themselves (Verses 17-24). This teaching practice can be easily identified in the Body of Christ today.

In verse twenty-five, we find circumcision an issue once again. Here Paul makes an even stronger identification of circumcision with the law than he did to the Galatians. Paul concludes, true "circumcision is of the heart," not of the flesh nor the letter.

### **Chapter Three**

If circumcision is of the heart then what purpose do the Jews serve? The Jews were the keepers of God's Word.

Verses three through eighteen deal with the position of the Jews, not easily understood in the King James Version. Let me paraphrase for better understanding.

If the Jews could not make it with God by circumcision, then how can we say that we Gentiles can make it with God. Faith in God is the only way to have a right standing with God, whether one is circumcised or uncircumcised.

Apparently, some were saying that the absence of faith among some proved the faithfulness of God. In like manner, some taught that unrighteousness among many focused attention on righteousness. Therefore, God should reward unbelief and unrighteousness, because this causes God's light shine brighter. This attribute is not much different from some today who say, "God sent this sickness so He could get glory out of healing." That is ignorance gone to seed, as someone once said. God is a life giver, not a death giver. God is a healer, not a disease giver. God is a cleanser, not a polluter.

From verses nineteen through thirty-one, Paul declares the answer to the Romans' righteousness of the law.

"...By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20) The English word "justified" in this passage is taken from the Greek word *dikaioo*. It is the same root Greek word that is translated righteousness. Justified is the verb form of the English noun, righteousness, and adjective, righteous. Because justified and righteous are two different English words, we think they mean two different things. That is not true.

Justified means to be made right. Righteousness means to be right. The word justified should be replaced with a new word "righteousnessificated".

In verse twenty-one, a righteousness of God that is independent of the law is introduced, even though the law and the prophets bore witness to it. This righteousness comes by faith in Jesus Christ to everyone who has faith.

Then we find our old memory-verse friend, Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Why is it that the church has chosen this verse for memory purposes? It is not a complete sentence. This verse talks about sin, rather than the context of the whole sentence, righteousness by faith. (See verses 21-26 for the whole sentence and its context.)

Verse twenty-four goes on to say that we have been righteousificated (made righteous) without charge by His grace through the purchase that Christ Jesus gave us. For the purpose of emphasis, Paul repeats verse twenty-five in verse twenty-six, "...to declare his righteousness." It is not our righteousness which comes from good works, but God's righteousness that comes by faith.

Before you read more of Romans, read Romans 3:21-26 again. Note, it is only one sentence. Count the number of righteousness words and the number of sin words. There are seven righteousness words and only two sin words.

Therefore, there can be no boasting, Paul exhorts. Because righteousness came not by our obedience, nor discipline, nor strength, but by simply trusting in Jesus Christ.

God is God of both the Jew and the Gentile, the circumcision and the uncircumcision, all through faith.

## **Chapter Four**

Chapter Four is very plain. If you read slowly thinking about what you read, it is nearly impossible to misunderstand. It simply says this. God imputed righteousness to Abraham, because of his faith in God. Circumcision was given as a sign of the faith. Some apparently argued that righteousness came because of the obedience of circumcision, but Paul speaks plainly about which came first. Paul says that righteousness came first, and circumcision followed. As you read the Book of James, written by the half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ, Bishop of Jerusalem, you will see that James and Paul were not in agreement about this point. Read between the lines to understand the heart of these two apostles to see that they were preaching the Gospel, not different gospels.

## **Chapter Five**

Chapter Five presents us with some apparent problems as we would read the King James Version. In verse three Paul writes, "...but we glory in tribulations also...." This sounds as though Paul is thanking God for sending the tribulations.

The Greek does not give this idea in the least. The idea presented in the Greek is, "while in the midst of tribulations, we still give glory or praise to God." Paul then explains a series of experience that occurs when tribulation comes from Satan or his friends. "Tribulation worketh patience." Some interpret this to mean tribulation produces or develops patience. This again is not the idea in the Greek. The Greek expresses that tribulation puts our patience to work, or begins to cause us to exercise our patience. When we exercise patience, we are approved of God because we look to Him and not to the circumstances. That approval helps us to maintain our hope in God, which God will not frustrate but bring to pass.

Paul then begins to talk about how Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. While we were weak, we received the righteousness of God by faith. Now that we have been saved in our weakness and given the righteousness of God through faith, we will also be saved from the wrath of God that comes upon the disobedient. Praise God.

Chapter Five closes with a very important and plain passage about righteousness. Romans 5:12-21 says, "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: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 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 of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 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.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Wow, what a statement about our relationship with God the Father! Righteousness is a free gift.

In verse fifteen Paul writes, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift." He writes this simple statement because many were saying as they do today that Adam fell by disobedience, therefore, we are saved by reversing that disobedience; we are saved by our obedience. That is good sound logic, but contrary to God. Not as the offence, so also is the free gift. The offence was by disobedience. The free gift is not like the Fall. We find that hard to understand because we are not accustomed to speaking with these negative comparisons. When Paul wrote verse fifteen, it was similar to his saying, "not as a donkey, so

also is my car." Now that is a dumb thing to say. Some may even laugh at such a statement. There are some similarities between my car and a donkey. They both touch the ground in four places and both may be used for transportation, but the similarities stop there. My car has so little in common with a donkey that it is ridiculous to make such a comparison. I believe that Paul was trying to make such a ridiculous comparison between how Adam fell, and how Jesus redeemed us that it would also be a bit funny. If we really understood what Paul was saying in this negative comparison, we probably would laugh as we read it. Praise God for the difference between the sin that came by the disobedient Fall of Adam and the righteousness of God that comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

We reign in life through that right standing relationship with God that came as a free gift through faith. Here again we would shout hallelujah, if we realized truly what a free gift was, especially a free gift from God. Most people think they know the definition of a gift. I did too, until the Holy Spirit showed me how childhood teaching had distorted that definition. We learn about a gift when we are small children. Most of us learned about gifts from our parents or family members at Christmas time. We were told that Santa Claus brings gifts. How excited we became, my sister and me. As the countdown to Christmas proceeded, we got even more excited, until we could not contain ourselves. We got so excited one day we just chased each other around the dining room table. We ran into the living room and started jumping up and down on the sofa. Mom head us from the kitchen. Striding into the living room, Mom looked around the archway and caught us jumping up and down on her one and only sofa. She pointed here finger at us and said, "If you are not good, Santa Claus will not come." With that very believable statement, she changed my definition of a gift. A gift suddenly became something I earned by my goodness. I am sure most of us heard the same thing, not to mention how many of us parents have said the same thing to our children.

You may think that since you are now an adult understanding the genuine meaning of a gift is simple. I know your head may have the proper understanding of a gift, but that is not enough. What does your heart believe? What was your response when receiving your last surprise gift? Did you say something like, "Oh, you did not need to do that."? Or maybe, "I do not deserve this." If that is true, you were right on both counts. It was a gift and the giver did not need to give it to you. If they did, it was not a gift but a wage. If you deserved it, it was not a gift but a wage.

We have received a free gift of righteousness. We did not deserve it. We could not earn it. God did not need to do it as a reward for our obedience, for then it would have been a wage paid as a reward for our ability or discipline or strength. No, righteousness is not a wage from God. It does not come from obedience. It is the righteousness of God, and it comes to us as a free gift. Even though Adam fell through disobedience, we receive the free gift of righteousness through faith or trust in Jesus Christ. Praise God.

Is it any wonder the Romans, the greatest law givers the world has ever seen, were having a hard time understanding the one and only Gospel of power?

## **Chapter Six**

This marvelous truth of a righteousness from God which comes by faith alone is a liberating truth. However, it can be easily misunderstood by those who continue to think in terms of the law, as the Romans and Roman Christians apparently did.

Some apparently thought that since righteousness was a gift, they could continue in transgressions of the law so that the grace of God may abound. That idea simply reveals that these people do not at all understand the righteousness of God.

By this gift of righteousness, we are totally immersed or baptized in Christ. Therefore, we identify with His death, and we count the old man dead. We also identify with His resurrection, and count the new man to be alive toward God, in right standing with Him.

Since the old man is dead, the spirit-realm nature of sin and death is no longer influencing us. Therefore, that body of sin (verse 6) no longer demands that we serve it. We are dead unto sin and alive unto Christ.

Therefore, we do not yield our soul and body to the spirit-realm nature that was death because of separation from God. But we yield our soul and body to the Spirit that is life because it is reconciled to God by Christ in righteousness.

Chapter Six closes with another old memory-verse friend, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

## **Chapter Seven**

Chapters Five and Six addressed themselves to the spirit-realm exchange that occurred as spirit-realm sin and death was exchanged for the free gift of righteousness.

Chapter Seven then deals with the warfare of the soul-realm that occurs as we put on the soul-realm attributes of Christ.

Paul begins the chapter by using an illustration of marriage. As long as we have a living spouse, we are bound to that person alone. Extra marital relationships are forbidden. Many use this passage as a teaching about divorce and remarriage, but it is not intended to be that. It is an illustration about the law. Paul uses it because the Romans understood the law. Paul operated in the same wisdom that Jesus did in talking to people with illustrations they could understand.



Moving on! When a spouse dies the remaining member is free from that marital commitment. As death releases a partner from marriage bonds, so the death of Christ and our identification with that death, has freed us from the bonds of the law. But we are not just free from the bonds of the law, we are married to Christ. We have not thrown off all partners; we have just changed partners from the law to Christ.

Verses seven through twenty-one seems to be such a mystery to us all, but should not be. It is really a very simple thing. Let me help you to understand it.

Just because we have changed partners from the law to Christ, does not mean that the law is bad. The law is good and spiritual. It is not sin.

However, all the law could do was to give us the outward standard of conduct. It gave us no power to accomplish the standard or objective. Because the law gave us a standard, it revealed to us when we missed the mark or sinned. Let me say it this way. We take our rifle into the woods to practice shooting. We raise it to our shoulder and begin to shoot. A friend asks if we hit the mark. We reply, "I hit something, and that is all that matters." The friend cannot judge us because he did not know what the target was. The objective was to hit anything, not some particular target. The friend could not judge our shooting, because he had no standard to judge by. That is like man before the law. Who could tell if he missed the mark or not, since there was no mark given to hit.

Then our friend puts up a bull's-eye and challenges us to hit the it. We aim the rifle and shoot. The target is examined to see if we hit the mark or missed the mark. No hole is found in the target. We missed the mark. Our poor marksmanship is revealed. We may have used the same rifle the very same way as when there was no target. But because we missed the mark we are judged, and that rightfully so, by our friend. The shooting was just as good when we shot at a target as when we did not shoot at a target. When there is a target (standard), judgment can be made on whether we have missed the mark.

The law is as the target. It provides the standard or objective. Man's life style was the same before and after the law. Before the law, no one appeared to miss the mark for there was no mark. Then came the target of the law and man's missing the target of the law was revealed.

The law is not sin. The target cannot be blamed for poor marksmanship.

This brings us to verses fifteen through twenty-five. Paul says he does not do what he wants to do. He ends up doing the things he hates. When he does the things he hates, he confirms the value of the law, that it reveals that he missed the target. But he claims that it is sin that dwells in him that causes the problem.

From this passage many defend a dual nature theology, claiming that sin nature and righteousness nature dwell simultaneously in us. On the surface, that seems

to be the case. But we must clearly understand spirit, soul, and body to properly interpret this passage.

The righteousness of God which Paul speaks of in previous chapters, is the result of the spirit-realm new birth. There is no sin nature remaining in the new born spirit of man.

Paul refers to the soul realm in Chapter Seven. The habits and memory of the old man is an influence toward sin. The mind of Christ and the Word of God influence us to walk in righteousness. The thing that we set our mind upon will influence us most. Hatred toward something or somebody will occupy our hearts and minds and will eventually cause us to do the acts of hatred that we did not want to do.

For that reason it is essential that we put on the mind of Christ, which is the Word of God, and therefore do the works of righteousness.

I have often said that a person cannot go into a corner and stop thinking about strawberries. He can think about many fruits or even vegetables, but soon he will check to see how long it has been since thinking about strawberries! In checking, the purpose of not thinking about strawberries is defeated. Paul concludes Chapter Seven by saying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Do not stop reading there. The answer quickly follows. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Paul is simply saying that Jesus Christ has and will deliver him from that body of death.

## **Chapter Eight**

Chapter Eight is the Victory Chapter.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." We often stop reciting the quote there. We say to ourselves, "I am born again, I am in Christ, therefore there is no condemnation, whatever I do." No, that is not how it works. Read the rest of verse one: "...who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Not only must the spirit man be in Christ, but our mind and body needs to be walking after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, in order to experience no condemnation.

Verse two tells us how this works. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." I know what the law of sin and death is, but what is the law of the Spirit of life? The Greek word for law used here is *nomos*. It was basically used to describe how the shepherds allocated the grazing grounds, so that all would have water and some good grass. The meaning of law (*nomos*) is not statutes and commandments, but rather, how the thing works. So the Kaiser Emphasized Version of Romans 8:2 reads, "For the way in which the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus now works in me has set me free from the way in which sin and death did work in me." Hallelujah!

There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, for the way in which the Spirit of life works has made me free from the way in which the spirit of sin and death used to work in us. The law could not help us, for it had no power to give life. It only had power to reveal the missing of the mark.

Chapter Eight goes on to explain that Christ condemned sin in the flesh. The issue is not being born again, but whether we are carnal minded or not. Those in the flesh cannot please God. Key verses are ten and eleven telling us, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." But remember our body will also be quickened if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us.

Paul then makes a strong statement about being sons of God, because the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. All of creation groans and travails waiting for the redemption of our bodies, and we continue to hope for that. As we hope for the unseen, in like manner we pray in the spirit, not knowing what we pray for, but the spirit searches our minds and hearts and intercedes for us.

Then Paul implies that once we are born again and walking after the spirit, God will take over from their. He can make all things work together for good to them that love Him and are called according to his purpose. God knew by our actions that he could save us. After being born again, He called us, justified us, and glorified us. If God be for us, who can be against us? The obvious implied answer is, nobody can be against us effectively. God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?

Who can accuse us, when it is God who has righteousified us?

Who can condemn us when it is Christ who is interceding for us?

Who can separate us from the love of God?

This brings us to Romans 8:36, which may be the most mis-interpreted scripture in the entire Bible. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." That verse is often quoted to confirm that God would kill us all the day long so that we would be worthy to be accepted by him. "Our cross which God gave us," we religiously say, "is to be treated by God as if we are sheep for the slaughter." This verse is given to justify just the opposite. It is given to illustrate the things which will not separate us from the love of God. It says nothing at all about God pruning us or chastising us. It is talking about the things which are not effective in trying to separate us from the love of God. For verse thirty-seven quickly adds, "NAY, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Paul then lists even more things which will not separate us from the love of God including; death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature. Praise God for his great love for us.

## **Chapter Nine**

The whole point of chapter nine is simply that God is God and he is not limited to what he has done in the past. If he chooses to have the older serve the younger, he can do it. If He chose to give the gift of righteousness to them who have faith in Him, rather to those who obey the law, that is His business. He is still a sovereign God.

## **Chapter Ten**

Paul then again explains the two kinds of righteousness, the righteousness of faith, which is God's righteousness, and the righteousness which comes from the law. Moses described the righteousness which is of the law. But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe. If you chose the righteousness of the law, then you will have to live by that obedience to maintain your righteousness. but the righteousness of faith talks. What does it say?

Verses six through ten tells us what the righteousness of faith says. Do not say in your heart that you will do the great work of going up to heaven and bring Christ down to receive the reward of righteousness. Do not say in your heart that you will go down to the deep and bring Christ up again from the dead to earn your righteousness. What does the righteousness of faith then say. It says, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith, which we preach; 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." The righteousness of faith says that because it understands that, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

It is by believing that we are saved, not by our obedience to the law, Paul is telling the legalistic Roman Christians.

Then Paul turns them to their responsibility. If they are going to believe, they must hear the message. if they are going to hear the message, they must heard a preacher. How can one preach unless he be sent. For you see faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the preaching of Christ, one translation reads.

Paul reminds the Romans that Israel heard the word but ignored it. God sent Moses, then Isaiah saying to Israel, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

## **Chapter Eleven.**

Paul opens chapter eleven by saying that God did not forsake Israel. The grace of God was available to those who would chose it. If salvation is by grace then it cannot be of the law. If it is by the law then it cannot be by grace. There is NO OTHER GOSPEL but the gospel of grace Paul is saying.

Paul goes on to explain that because Israel did not choose grace, God opened up the gospel to the gentiles to be grafted. We gentile Christians therefore should be very thankful and fearful for if the natural branches, Israel, were cut off, how much easier would it be for God to cast off the grafted in branches.

## **Chapter Twelve**

Paul then pleads with the Roman Christians to present their bodies as though it was a living sacrifice. So that they should be transformed by the renewing of their minds. The word used in the Greek for transformed is *metamorphoo*. It is the same word used to describe what happens when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. When our minds are renewed to the righteousness of faith our lives become butterflyed and we put to test the will of God, finding it to be good, and acceptable, and perfect.

Therefore we should not get proud and puffed up in the body of Christ. Wait on the ministry that God has given us. Paul is telling us how to put on the mind which is in Christ Jesus:

1. Be kindly affectioned one to another
2. be not slothful in business
3. be fervent in prayer
4. serve the Lord
5. rejoice in hope
6. be patient in tribulation
7. be instant in prayer
8. give to those in need
9. be hospitable
10. bless those who persecute you
11. rejoice with them that rejoice
12. weep with those who weep
13. be not high minded
14. be not conceited
15. do not give evil for evil
16. if possible, be at peace with all men.
17. avenge not yourselves.
18. give food and drink to your enemies
19. overcome evil with good.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

In this chapter Paul exhorts the Roman Christians to be obedient to their political leaders and the law of the land, for they also are under God's authority.

Paul then concludes this epistle to the Romans with three chapters of practical advice about Christian living

## **Summary**

So Paul writes this letter to the Roman Christians to instruct them about the righteousness of God which is theirs by faith and not by works of the law. In this letter Paul puts forth his argument against another gospel of the law. This is the last letter that we have record that he wrote until he arrives in Rome itself, to be judged.

From Corinth, Paul returns to Jerusalem where he was arrested and sent to Caesarea. There he was held for two years before he was sent on the Rome by his request to be tried as a Roman citizen for his proclaiming of the gospel of grace.

# Chapter 14

## Ephesians

### Time and Place

The book of Ephesians was written by Paul from his Roman captivity. It was written about A.D. 62-63, as were Philipians, Colossians, and Philemon.

At this time Paul was in his late fifties. He had been serving the Lord for about thirty years. For the last fifteen years he had been traveling to preach the gospel, enduring persecutions, beatings, stonings, and imprisonments.

Paul had visited Ephesus returning to Jerusalem from his second journey. He lived in Ephesus on for two years on his third journey, preaching and teaching in and around the area.

As you remember, the silversmiths in Ephesus stirred up the people against Paul because they lost customers as for whom they made idols to the goddess Diana, as they were converted to Christianity.

Because of Paul's ministry in and around Ephesus, many authorities believe that this letter was not just to Ephesus but was also a circular letter like that to the Galatian churches.

### Chapter One

Paul opens this letter as he does many others, with a statement of his apostolic authority from Jesus Christ by the will of God. Then he blesses them as he does in every letter, "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

From verse three through verse fourteen, Paul sets down a strong statement of their spiritual position with God. There are two possible reasons for this approach. First, Paul has spent more time with the church at Ephesus than nearly any other group with which he ministered. Therefore, they knew the basic doctrine well and were ready and able to receive and understand this spiritual exhortation. Secondly, because of the nature of religion in the area, they may have been tempted away from that spiritual understanding.

Vs 3. Blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places.  
Vs 4. God has chosen us.  
Vs 4. We are without blame.  
Vs 5. We are predestined unto adoption as children.  
Vs 6. We are called to praise him.  
Vs 7. We have redemption in Jesus through his blood.  
Vs 8. Our sins are forgiven.  
Vs 8. We abound toward wisdom.  
Vs 9. He has made known to us the mystery of his will.  
Vs 11. We have obtained an inheritance.  
Vs 12. We should be his praise.  
Vs 13. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

From Ephesians 1:17 through Ephesians 2:22 Paul pronounces a spiritual blessing on them.

The blessing is that they have knowledge of him and that the eyes of their heart be opened. For what purpose?

1. To know the hope of his calling.
2. To know the riches of unearned possessions.
3. To know the greatness of his power to us who believe.

In Chapter one, verse twenty, the emphasis shifts to what Christ accomplished for us. Paul may be emphasizing Christ because of the religious influence from their past worship of the goddess Diana. God wrought things in Christ when:

1. God raised him from the dead.
2. God set Christ at his own right hand.
  - a. far above principalities
  - b. far above powers
  - c. far above might
  - d. far above dominion
  - e. far above every name.
3. God put all things under his feet.
4. God made him the head of the church.
  - a. the church is his body
  - b. the church is the fullness of Christ.

In Chapter Two, Paul identifies the Ephesians and us with Christ:

1. We are quickened
  - a. who were once dead in sin.
  - b. who walked the course of this world.
  - c. who walked according to the prince of the power of the air.
  - d. who walked among children of the disobedient.
  - e. who were by nature children of wrath.
2. By grace are we saved.



3. We are raised up together with Christ.
4. We are made to sit together in Christ Jesus.
5. We will show forth his grace in the future.
6. We are saved by grace through faith.
7. Salvation is a gift from God.
  - a. Salvation is not of works.
  - b. We cannot boast.

Verse ten says, "...For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...." To me this is a reference to the work of the silversmiths in Ephesus. They once looked to the silversmiths to fashion wonderful works of art for worship. Now they become the fashioned work of God, that they give glory to God by their works.

Paul continues to remind them that they were once gentiles, but now they are made nigh by the blood of Jesus. The implication is that they are made nigh unto God by nothing else except the blood of Jesus. And by this blood of Jesus, he was made our peace and there is no division between Christians from Jewish or gentile backgrounds. Jesus has abolished the enmity between Jew and gentile, and also has taken away the law of commandments to bring peace. Therefore you are no more strangers but fellowcitizens. In him we are builded together for an habitation for God.

### **Chapter Three**

Paul starts chapter three with the phrase, "For this cause...." He is referring back to the previous verse twenty two of the second chapter. For the cause of building together the church for an habitation of God, he has been called to preach the gospel of grace. In verse eight Paul then tells that being the least of all saints, he was give this grace of God to preach among the gentiles. In verse fourteen, Paul continues, "For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...." Paul then proceeds to pray for them for Christ to dwell in them by faith, rooted and grounded in love. His desire is that they know the love of Christ and be filled with all the fullness of God. Then he concludes the prayer with that familiar passage, "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, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

### **Chapter Four**

Having given half of the letter to a very positive exhortation of who they are in Christ, Paul turns in Chapter Four to practical instruction. Keep the unity that is yours in Christ. It seems there must have been some problem with unity since Pauls gives such emphasis to it. There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all.

Paul again turns to the way which God accomplished this by referring to how Christ led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men, explaining that Christ descended and also ascended. The gifts that he gave to men through that experience through the cross were apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. We seldom associate that passage of the five fold ministry gifts with the work that Christ did through the cross and resurrection, but that surely is the context of that passage. The purpose of those ministry gifts is to bring the body of Christ into unity. God help us to bring that to pass. Grow up into Christ.

Paul then presents a negative example by exhorting the Ephesians not to walk as the Gentiles walk. "You Ephesians know better."

So put off your old ways by being "renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put off the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:23-24). Here Paul is speaking of a soul realm "putting off" of thinking, feeling and deciding. This is something that we can do ourselves. We cannot make ourselves new spirit realm creatures; we cannot make ourselves "born again". Only God can do that by His grace power in response to our Faith-trust in Jesus Christ. But the soul realm we have control over. We can put on the new man in the spirit of our minds.

Paul concludes Chapter Four with a series of very practical things which we can do to be renewed in the spirit of our mind.

## **Chapter Five**

The "therefore" again refers back to the list of practical instructions in Chapter Four. Therefore, be followers of Christ by walking in love. In verse three through seven Paul lists works of the flesh which should not be named among them. In contrast to the Corinthian letter, here he does not say that they have practiced such. That really matters not. The important thing is that they do not practice the works of the flesh.

In verse Seventeen he calls them to understand what the will of the Lord is:

1. Be not drunk with wine
2. Be filled with the spirit
3. Speaks to each other with Psalms
4. Speak to each other with hymns
5. Sing to each other spiritual songs
6. Sing and make melody in your heart.
7. Be thankful to God for all things
8. Submit yourselves to one another.

Knowing the will of God, apply it in your own homes, for your homes are the type of the church, and the church is the body of Christ.

Paul then concludes Chapter Five with practical advice about marriage.

## **Chapter Six**

Paul continues giving practical advice about family relationships. Then in verse ten, Paul begins to close this letter with a strong statement about spiritual warfare and authority.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and spiritual forces. Then we are reminded of our spiritual armor in verses fourteen through seventeen:

1. loins girt about with truth
2. breastplate of righteousness
3. feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace
4. shield of faith
5. Helmet of salvation
6. sword of the spirit.

Paul then closes this letter to the Ephesians with a blessing, "Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

### **Summary**

From Romans imprisonment, Paul in his late fifties writes back to his old friends at Ephesus. he presents them a strong reminder of who they are in Christ, that in Christ they may come into unity. Knowing who they are in Christ, they should put on the new man, and put off the old man. Start by applying the truth to unity in the home and remember that you have spiritual armor to stand against the enemy who would divide us, beginning in our homes.

# Chapter 15

## Philippians

### Time and Place

The book of Philippians was written by Paul from Rome about A.D. 62- 63.

Philippi was a city in Macedonia that Paul was directed to by a vision on his third missionary journey. It was in Philippi that Paul and Silas were miraculously freed from jail. There he called upon his Roman citizenship to help in him out of the problem.

### Chapter One

Paul opens this letter with his usual blessing. "Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:2).

Paul commends them for their continuing fellowship with him. He then prays for them:

1. That their love may abound more and more,
2. That they approve things that are excellent,
3. That they may continue sincere and without offence, and
4. That they be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

Paul then goes on to explain that the things which have happened to him have been for the good of the gospel. He is speaking of his imprisonment in Rome. Others have become confident because of how Paul endures his persecutions. Therefore, they preach Christ even more boldly, even though not always with the purest motivation. Still, Christ is preached. In that Paul rejoices and will continue to rejoice.

In Chapter One verse twenty Paul says that however things turn out, Christ will be magnified in his body. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21). Paul is torn between two good things, to go home to be with the Lord or to live for his glory.

Paul speaks of living so that he might visit them again and enjoy their rejoicing in Jesus Christ. But if he cannot visit them, he wants to hear that they have kept a

good life style, that the stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving for the faith of the gospel. He encourages them to not be terrified by their adversaries, for in we are not only to believe on Christ but suffer persecution for him.

## **Chapter Two**

Remaining on the subject of persecutions, Paul continues in Chapter Two. If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, any bowels of mercy, and certainly there are these things, then make Paul full of joy by being likeminded, of the same love, and of one accord. Keep strife out of the body of Christ by submitting one to another. Let every man determine to take care of himself, and others when possible.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

1. thought it not robbery to be equal with God,
2. made himself of no reputation,
3. took upon himself the form of a servant,
4. made in the likeness of men,
5. He humbled himself, and
6. He was obedient unto death.

By this God exalted Jesus Christ by giving him a name or authority which was above every name or authority. God intends that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Being likeminded with Christ, continue to obey as you have done in my absence, Paul says. For God is working in you for his good will and pleasure.

Do not murmur or argue among yourselves as the world does, Paul continues. Hold fast the word of life so that Paul can rejoice that he did not labor among them in vain.

Paul then tells them that he hopes to send Timothy to them, but that he also hopes to come himself. Paul thinks he needs also to send Epaphroditus, because he wants to visit them. He was sick but God was merciful and healed him.

## **Chapter Three**

Paul begins to close the letter by giving his final exhortation.

1. Rejoice in the Lord,
2. beware of dogs,
3. beware of evil doers,
4. beware of concision.

The concision were those who insisted upon circumcision. We who worship God in Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus are the circumcision, having no confidence in the flesh. Apparently the issue of circumcision was not just an issue surrounding the Galatian churches, but had become a general point of deception throughout all the churches. Remember, Paul even mentioned it in his letter to the Roman church.

Paul then lists his worldly credentials from verse five through verse six. But Paul counts all these worldly credentials a loss for Christ. He counts them as dung. Paul desires with all of his heart to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God which is by faith. Why does Paul desire this? That he may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Paul goes on to say that he does not rest, as though he had apprehended Christ, but he might apprehend Christ, for whom he was apprehended. For that reason, Paul forgets what is behind him, all of his failures, and all of his accomplishments. In Philippians 3:14 Paul says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Let everyone agree on this. Follow me Paul exhorts. Our life style is not of this earth but of heaven; from which we look for Jesus Christ who shall change our vile bodies into one like his glorious body. This reference is obviously to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, Philippi was very near to Thessalonica, where the brethren had been deceived to think that Jesus had already come again. Maybe the Philippians had been subject to the same deception.

## **Chapter Four**

Paul finally closes this short letter of positive exhortation with one of the most positive statements in the entire word of God.

1. Rejoice in the Lord always.
2. let your moderation be known of all men.
3. Be careful for nothing.
4. By prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving let your requests be known.
5. The Peace of God keep your hearts and minds.

Paul then sets down in verse eight that most famous passage, telling us how to let the peace of God rule our hearts and minds. Think on these things:

1. Whatsoever things are true,
2. whatsoever things are honest,
3. whatsoever things are just,
4. whatsoever things are pure,

5. whatsoever things are lovely,
6. whatsoever things are of a good report,
7. if there be any virtue,
8. if there be any praise,

Think in these things.

Paul rejoices greatly in the Lord, that their care for him has flourished. He knows how to be abased and how to abound. Paul says, he can be abased or abound "through Christ which strengtheneth me." Yes, that very often used and familiar verse about doing all thing through Christ who strengtheneth us, is in the context not of doing great exploits for God, but in the context of being able to handle lack or abundance through the strength of Christ.

Paul commends them as being the only church from Macedonia that gave help to him after he left. However, he still looks to God to supply all of his needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Paul then closes the letter with a short benediction: "Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Then a final statement: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

# Chapter 16

## Colossians

### Time and Place

Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians from his Roman imprisonment.

The city of Colossia lay near the main road from Antioch of Pisidia to Ephesus. Nevertheless, Paul had not been seen of them, as we read in Colossians 2:1.

It was Epaphras, Paul's fellow servant, who had ministered to lay the foundation of the Colossian church. Paul was therefore not building on another man's foundation.

As were the Galatian churches, as also the church at Colossia was subject to the other gospel teaching of the Judaizing Christians. There is NO OTHER GOSPEL save the gospel of grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that is ours by faith in him alone.

### Chapter One

Paul opens this letter with the statement of his apostolic authority, given by Jesus Christ. Following that comes his blessing, "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

In a major portion of chapter one, Paul lays down a strong declaration of who we are in Christ. His desire is that the Colossians:

1. be filled with the knowledge of God's will,
2. walk worthy of the Lord,
3. be strengthened with might,
4. give thanks to the Father,
  - a. who made us partakers of his inheritance,
  - b. delivered us from darkness,
  - c. translated us into the kingdom of his dear son,
  - d. in whom we have redemption through his blood.

Then Paul turns his attention to defining Christ. He is:

1. the image of the invisible God,



2. the firstborn of every creature,
3. creator of all things
  - a. in heaven,
  - b. in earth
  - c. visible,
  - d. in visible,
  - e. thrones,
  - f. dominions
  - g. principalities,
  - h. powers
  - j. all things
4. the head of the body,
5. firstborn from the dead,
6. The one in whom all fulness dwells,
7. The one by whom peace was made through the blood of his cross.

Through this, "You...yet now hath be reconciled."

Paul's job as a minister is to "...reveal the mystery which hath been hid from ages and 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."

## **Chapter Two**

In this chapter Paul warns the Colossians against those who would beguile them (verse four) through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (verse eight).

Paul then repeats in verse nine "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Then he adds, "And ye are complete in him...." Nothing needs to be added, not philosophy, not traditions of men, not rudiments of the worlds.

In him we are circumcised, not with hands but by putting off the body of sins. We are buried with him. We are risen with him. We are quickened together with him.

Therefore, do not allow others to judge you outwardly. Do not allow others to beguile you of your reward by voluntary humility and worship of angels.

## **Chapter Three**

If ye then be risen with christ, set your mind on things above.

Mortify in your members:

1. fornication,
2. uncleanness,
3. inordinate affection,

4. evil concupiscence
5. covetousness.

Put off:

1. anger,
2. wrath,
3. malice,
4. blasphemy,
5. filthy communications.

Put on the new man:

1. bowels of mercies,
2. kindness,
3. humbleness of mind,
4. meekness,
5. longsuffering,
6. forbear one another,
7. forgive one another,
8. put on charity,
9. let the peace of God rule your hearts,
10. let the word of God dwell in you,
11. do all in the name of the Lord.

Paul closes this chapter and the letter with a list of practical instructions to wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters.

## **Summary**

Once again in this letter, Paul deals with the gospel of grace, warning the Christians to not add to the gospel. There is NO OTHER GOSPEL, except the gospel of grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that comes only by faith in him.

## **Chapter 17**

### **Hebrews**

There has been no mention of the book of Hebrews in all of this review of Paul's life and letters. The reason is simply that there is a significant question about whether or not Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews. There is certainly no indication from where it is written or at what time it was written.

However, there is some indication that Paul may have written this letter. Certainly the revelation of Christ relative to the Hebrew understanding of sacrifice, Paul could have written. There are also other similarities to Paul's letters that would indicate that Paul did write this epistle. There are however, some familiar passages of Paul's letters that are missing. For example, Paul's opening greeting, his statement of apostolic authority, and the familiar blessing, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

#### **Chapter One**

Chapter One introduces us to the Christ of God as the one by whom God has spoken to us in this last day. He is above the angels both in his person and in his office.

#### **Chapter Two**

In this second chapter, we are exhorted to give even more attention to Christ, and not neglect so great a salvation, for He is the Son of God and the head of all authority. But this Christ of God was made to suffer on our behalf, to destroy death and the power of death. God made Christ like unto us, who are called his brethren in verse seventeen, that he might be made "a merciful and faithful high priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." In the close of this chapter, the writer appeals to the understanding of the Hebrews of the office of the priest, who made reconciliation for the sins of the people.

#### **Chapter Three**

Therefore, think about the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. He was faithful, even as Moses was faithful. This is a very wise introduction of Moses for comparison purposes. Ultimately, the writer will show the Hebrews how Christ Jesus is greater than Moses, but he introduces Moses to

the comparison on equal terms, so as to not offend those who are faithful to Moses and the law.